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THE END OF AN AGE

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# THE END OF AN AGE

*and Other Essays*

BY

WILLIAM RALPH INGE

FORMERLY DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S

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## P R E F A C E

Most of this book is new; but the greater part of the first chapter appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, part of Chapter V and all of Chapter VI in *Philosophy*. I have not attempted to remove all repetitions from these independent essays. The titles of the chapters may sound more despondent than the text. The next fifty years are likely to be a very difficult and dangerous time; but the body politic generates anti-toxins as well as toxins, and the volume of Toynbee's *Study of History* on "Challenge and Response" is a good tonic against pessimism.



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I

THE END OF AN AGE



## I

## THE END OF AN AGE

THE phrase *fin de siècle* was often heard at the date when the nineteenth century ended and the twentieth began. There was no reason to expect any noticeable change at that time, though to our countrymen the death of Queen Victoria seemed to mark the end of a great period. The phrase *ipsa clausula saeculi* is found in Tertullian, who no doubt was thinking of the end of the world. Expressions of despair, a veritable chorus of woe, were common on the lips of Christians and Pagans alike in the miserable two centuries which followed. There was then too much reason to think that a great civilisation was dying.

The conviction or suspicion that we have reached another turning-point, such as heralded the end of Graeco-Roman culture at the disruption of the Western Empire, is widespread in Europe to-day. The first World War gave a severe shock to security: the second seems to have shaken civilisation to its foundations. I have collected in this chapter the opinions of several representative writers, and have added my own comments. I have chosen examples from different nations, and have not selected writers who share the same point of view. Some of them wrote before 1939, others express the added anxiety

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caused by the second stroke. The new Thirty Years War, as the double convulsion, divided by an uneasy truce, may possibly be called by future historians, is perhaps the greatest calamity which has ever befallen the human race.

My first example shall be Oswald Spengler, whose work on *The Decline of the West*<sup>1</sup> had a resounding success in Germany after the first war, though it was written just before that war broke out. He is an anti-intellectualist and a romantic, who has accepted one side of Hegel's philosophy. He owes a great debt to Nietzsche, and like his master tells us that "man is a beast of prey. All the paragons of virtue and thinkers on social ethics are merely beasts of prey with their teeth drawn. The great beasts of prey are noble creatures in the fullest degree." There is "no progress, no goal, no way of humanity." "War is the eternal form of higher human existence; States exist for the sake of war, and the history of the world is the history of States."

History for Spengler is mainly the history of three great cultures—that of Greece and Rome, of the Arabs, and of western Europe. In the last, England and Germany took the lead; but the English have grown tired; their decadence is "an alarming spectacle." Germany remains. In politics he favours a Disraelian Toryism, an alliance of Conservatism and Socialism against Liberalism. Socialism means an all-powerful State; instead of riches and poverty,

<sup>1</sup> Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, Allen and Unwin Ltd.

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it means command and obedience. For the German there is “an unbounded necessity to serve, to follow, to venerate no matter whom and no matter what, faithful like a dog.” “The legions of Caesar are awakening again.” The enemy is liberal Democracy, represented by England, the League of Nations, and the Weimar Republic. The sole aim for a State is the acquisition of power; happiness does not matter.

History is divided into time cycles, within which are independent cultures, each having an individual style, which marks its art, science, and philosophy. “There are no eternal truths. Each philosophy is the expression of its own age.” Each culture is a self-contained whole, which like the year passes through spring, summer, autumn and winter. Autumn is distinguished by rationalism and individualism, and by ambitious philosophical systems. In winter, culture passes into civilisation, a disintegrating phase of cosmopolitan ideals and a mixture of races. Western Europe has now reached this stage. We need no more poets and philosophers, but “hard” organisers. Democracy must give way to efficient Caesarism. There can be no reversal of the course prescribed by destiny.

It is easy to see why this book, with its denial of absolute values, its disparagement of reason, and its contempt for liberal Democracy, caught hold of the Germans who were moving in the same direction. Its pessimism agreed with the mood of the

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nation which had suffered a defeat in war. Its main thesis has not found much support in England.

The idea of the State as a super-organism is a romantic vagary. It is a misleading analogy to compare the history of a nation to the life of an individual. It is true that civilisations or cultures seem often to have a flowering time and then to wither. Arnold Toynbee in his great *Study of History*<sup>1</sup> has tried to discover the laws of growth and decay. But he finds no reason to think that there is an inner law whereby a nation becomes senile and loses its vigour. Some civilisations have been destroyed when full of life by foreign conquest, like the interesting Arabian culture of Cordova and Bagdad. It is not easy to discover any seasonal changes in the stable and unprogressive civilisations of ancient Egypt, of India and China. Above all, the theory that cultures are self-contained and independent is contradicted by the whole of history. We might almost say that all the great achievements of mankind have been due to the fusion of two cultures. The chief feature of Hellenistic history in the period of decline was a syncretism which after an interval of chaos produced results of great value. It can hardly be suggested that the development of western Europe would have been the same if Greek science, Roman law, and the Christian religion had not moulded the character of European life and thought.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Study of History*, Oxford University Press.

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It seemed necessary to give some space to a writer who has certainly had a considerable influence upon recent history. But he will be chiefly remembered as one of the inspirers of Nazism. His historical schematism is erroneous; his racial romanticism unscientific, and his pessimism will be rejected if the revolutionary fever is followed by a hopeful reconstruction. We may hope that his immoralism and cult of violence will also be discredited. Toynbee's formula of challenge and response is not only more encouraging, but it explains far more correctly the causes why nations sometimes advance and sometimes decay.

Count Hermann Keyserling, who married Bismarck's granddaughter, was a Baltic baron, sprung from a distinguished family in Estonia, where he owned an estate which has now been confiscated. His early book on Immortality<sup>1</sup> (*Unsterblichkeit*) is a masterpiece, one of the best studies of this subject. But he came under the influence of the renegade Englishman, Houston Chamberlain, whose *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* developed in their most extravagant form the racialism and anti-Semitism adopted by the Nazis. He was also attracted by Freud and psycho-analysis, and by the importance which this school ascribed to the "unconscious." This has been on the whole an unfortunate influence. There is nothing very respectable about

<sup>1</sup> Count Hermann Keyserling, *Immortality*, Oxford University Press.

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the unconscious or sub-conscious part of our nature. The tendency to emphasise it is part of the revolt against the intellect, of which William James was the most prominent spokesman, and which is also apparent in the philosophy of Bergson. Another influence which affected Keyserling was his study of Indian thought. He considered that Buddhism, which "bears the stamp of a princely mind," is "superior to Christianity, which was originally a religion of the proletariat." As a matter of history, Christianity never has been a religion of the proletariat; but there is an unmistakable aristocratic prejudice in Keyserling's attitude.

In 1920 Keyserling founded the School of Wisdom at Darmstadt, in a house lent him by the Grand Duke of Hesse. His ideal seems to have been the creation of a new aristocratic order, which though international could only arise in Germany, for "the overwhelming majority of all great Europeans have come from Germany." Here we recognise the disciple of Houston Chamberlain. He is tender to autocracy, and strangely believes that "till lately" the Russian Tsars represented a higher type of mankind than the Western monarchs.

He is convinced that we have really reached the end of an age. There has been an eruption of the lower, "telluric" forces of human nature, which has caused unparalleled horrors in Russia and other countries, but which has at the same time aroused a splendid vitality and joyous confidence in the young.

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This exaltation is to be noticed in Russia, Germany, Turkey and Italy. These young men reject with scorn all the values of the last century. Liberty, Democracy, Socialism are no longer words to conjure with. The young fear neither death nor misery; they are ready to die and more than ready to kill. Courage and faith are the only magnets that attract them. Nevertheless, this apparent regression to savagery, this barbaric rejection of all that mankind has hitherto agreed to honour, may be the precursor of a new spirituality. The line of evolution which began in the eighteenth century had finished its course. It had no promise for the future. It ended in the dehumanisation of man, in the reign of the machine, and in the vulgar worship of mere quantity.

Keyserling looks for a new Renaissance, rather Pagan than Christian, for Christian ethics separate spiritual values too sharply from "telluric." But there may be a great Christian Renaissance, which will start in Russia. The same prediction has been made by leading Russian émigrés. He would like to see a new ascetic nobility, like Plato's "guardians" or the "Samurai" imagined by H. G. Wells in an early phase of his thought. His ideal commonwealth includes a large measure of socialisation.

Count Keyserling sent me a copy of his *La Révolution Mondiale*, published in 1934. In gratefully acknowledging the gift, I ventured to suggest that he had rather left out of account the north-western

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group of European nations and their offshoots beyond the seas, a very important part of the civilised world. These nations, I said, were not in a state of revolution. The Count did not like being criticised. He replied: "There may be no such person as Dean Inge, but there certainly is a world revolution." So that settled it.

At that time I hoped that there would be no second war, and that we should be spared the abrupt social changes which have overwhelmed the upper class in Britain, and brought to an end the comforts which in the last century made England the paradise of the learned professions. In another chapter I have discussed revolutions, using the word in the usual sense of a violent overturn of the political and social order. But there may be revolutions without guillotines, firing squads, and incendiarism. In this country we conduct even civil wars in a mild and gentlemanly manner. The changes which have now overtaken us may be more drastic and more permanent than those which followed revolutions on the Continent. Nevertheless, I think that I was justified in suggesting that the state of the north-western nations and their congeners ought to be treated separately. Where in Britain and America are the hard, cruel young men whom the author has seen in Russia, Germany and elsewhere? The type is unknown in this country, where an attempt at social revolution in 1926 ended in football matches between general strikers and police.

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The ruthless young Nazi and Communist is represented in England by Shaw's Straker, the chauffeur, a radical certainly, but with a sense of humour. The Marxian catchwords, "bourgeois" and "proletarian," have no relevance to social conditions in the west.

Keyserling is an original thinker, and like all original thinkers he is more interesting than those who are content to shout with the largest crowd; but like many other romanticists he is too much inclined to trust to impulse and instinct, as if these could provide a kind of personal inspiration.

The Dutch professor Huizinga, well known as a medievalist, published in 1936 an excellent little book called *In the Shadow of To-morrow*,<sup>1</sup> with the sub-title, "a diagnosis of the spiritual distemper of our time." It is enlarged from an address delivered at Brussels in 1935. He takes from St. Bernard the motto which I have sometimes used, *Habet mundus iste noctes suas et non paucas*. In one of these nights the world is groping its way.

We are in a demented world. Everywhere "men's hearts are failing them for fear, looking at the things that are coming on the earth." All that seemed sacred and immutable has become unsettled. There was a false dawn after the first war, but darkness soon returned. There have been in history periods of optimism, like the nineteenth century, which has been called the century of hope. Such was the age of

<sup>1</sup> J. Huizinga, *In the Shadow of To-morrow*, William Heinemann Ltd.

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Erasmus; such for a few years was the course of the French Revolution. Revolutionaries are buoyed up with the hope of sudden radical change; but we cannot speed up or retard the slow evolution of the historical process.

There is no close parallel in history to the systematic undermining of the social order which we see about us. Until now the professed aim of reformers was mainly to restore something which they believed to have existed before. The doctrine of evolution has destroyed faith in revivals, and the modern type of *enragé* wishes simply to sever all ties with the past. Every ideal which men have pursued for thousands of years is scornfully repudiated. And yet the pulse of society still beats vigorously, and history knows of no great sudden changes. "It is quite possible that later periods will view our own simply as the aftermath of the Great War." The steady progress of science, which has been checked in totalitarian countries and perverted to evil ends under the threat of "total war," on the whole shows a hopeful and uncorrupted spirit, which should check despondency.

Still, the diagnosis is and must be disquieting. Huizinga gives great importance to the growth of disintegrating relativism in philosophy and even in science. There is no longer anything absolutely true or false, right or wrong. Pragmatism encourages us to believe whatever we wish to believe, and denies that truth has any other meaning than what suits

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us. So far has anti-intellectualism gone in discrediting rationalism, that "reason has to look to faith to save it from dissolution." Every puerile superstition, of which educated persons in the last century would have been heartily ashamed, has taken heart of grace.

The repudiation of all ethical standards has encouraged the most shameless Machiavellianism in Germany. Several instances are given, which need not be repeated now. Reasons of State are supposed to justify any atrocity. Huizinga points out very sensibly that there is no reason why the national State should be the only supermoral association. Not only may other States claim the same privileges, but groups within the State will also place themselves above the moral law. The logical result of the deification of the State is absolute anarchism or Satanism.

Private morality in practice is perhaps no worse than it was. (Huizinga's book was written before the terrible demoralisation produced by the second war.) But the standard of ethics has deteriorated seriously. The romantic depreciation of virtue is a literary fashion. In international ethics the collapse is complete. There has been a great increase in what he calls puerilism—turning play into work and work into play. This, I fear, has been most evident in the English-speaking countries. Modernist art reveals the deep degradation of taste, a reversion to barbarism and a cult of the ugly and repulsive.

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War is an anachronism and an abomination; no good can ever come of it. But the spirit of the people is corrupted and poisoned by hatred artificially stimulated. Like Keyserling, Huizinga appeals for a new asceticism and a return to decent standards, which means a return to religion.

In the last chapter he sums up his argument. There is room for hope, though confidence is difficult. Barbarisation is a process whereby a condition of high value is superseded by elements of lower quality. The words *élite* and *mass* should be used solely as denoting types of mind. History records one decline and fall of civilisation. But the barbarisation of the Roman Empire was caused by an invasion of foreign peoples, by a recession of economic vitality, and by the rise of a religion which was largely indifferent to the old culture. These conditions do not exist now. The ancient world hoped nothing from the future. We are determined not to perish.

The grounds for hope are of a very general nature. The disease may work itself out. Every action is followed by reaction. The future is hidden from us; we may be sure that it will *not* be what we expect. “The Churches can only triumph in so far as they succeed in purifying the hearts of their members.” “The new asceticism will have to be a surrender to all that can be conceived as the highest. That can no more be nation or class than the individual existence of self. Happy those for whom that principle

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can only bear the name of Him who spoke: I am the way, the truth, and the life."

There is nothing in this book with which I do not cordially agree.

Another Hollander, Professor G. J. Heering, in his *The Fall of Christianity*,<sup>1</sup> has written an earnest indictment of the Churches for their failure to stop war. The present state of affairs is a deep stain upon our civilisation, and the followers of Christ have not realised their responsibility. This subject will be more fully considered in another chapter.

More important for our present purpose is *The End of Economic Man*<sup>2</sup> (1939), by Peter Drucker, an Austrian who, after acting as Financial Editor of the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger*, joined an international banking house as economist, and was adviser for British insurance companies. In 1937 he went to New York as correspondent for several British newspapers. He is therefore a highly competent economist and financier.

Fascism and Nazism represent a fundamental revolution. They are the only effective political force in Europe; they have reduced Democracy to impotent defence. Communism has definitely lost its fight. The West has wisely left it to cut its own throat, and it has done so.

<sup>1</sup> G. J. Heering, *The Fall of Christianity*, Allen and Unwin Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, William Heinemann Ltd.

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It is not true that in Germany a majority hostile to Nazism is held down by terror, nor that Hitler's success is due to clever propaganda. Both in Germany and Italy all the means of propaganda were in anti-fascist hands, until the victory of the two dictators. The phenomenon can be explained only by "a radical change in the order of values." The new order has no positive ideology, but is based on a negation of all the old ideas. Fascism is anti-everything. It is anti-liberal and anti-conservative; anti-religious and anti-atheist; against big business and against trade unionism. The author heard a Nazi agitator wildly applauded when he exclaimed: "We don't want lower bread prices, we don't want higher bread prices; we don't want unchanged bread prices; we want National Socialist bread prices." This, he says, came nearer to explaining Nazism than anything he has heard since. He ventures on the paradox that the masses believe in Fascism because they do *not* believe in its promises. The masses were in despair. They recognised that Marxism is dead, and that Socialism has become trade-unionism, a movement *within* capitalism. The great slump in 1929 shook men's belief in capitalism. Capitalism, however, has not failed as an economic system; "it has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams." But "there is no possibility of reconciling the supremacy of the economic sphere with the belief in freedom and equality as the true aims of society." What we have to look for, according to

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Drucker, is the rejection of economics, and the search for a non-economic standard of values. The "Nazi miracle" is the introduction of a non-economic industrial Socialism. This change in the standard of values all over Europe owes more to the Churches than is usually admitted. Both Catholics and Protestants have worked for "the integration of the structure of industrial society into a non-mechanical order."

As an expert economist, he has much to say on Nazi economics. Nazism rejects absolutely the American creed of "consumptionism," and returns to the economics of John Stuart Mill, who believed in thrift and saving. Both in Germany and Russia expenditure is drastically controlled, and a huge surplus is created, which is compulsorily invested in Government loans. In Germany these loans are diverted into non-productive expenditure on armaments, which it would seem must lead at last to a crash; but, as Drucker says, expenditure on guns is not more unproductive than on champagne, cigars, and cosmetics.

Are the totalitarian States unlike the rest of Europe? National character is the last resort of baffled historians. Why did Democracy collapse in Italy and Germany? Italy did not "lose the peace"; and for some years it looked as if Germany might assume the lead in a democratic movement against imperialism. But in both countries the middle class had no social prestige, and in both countries the

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great achievement of the nineteenth century was not middle-class ascendancy, but national unification. The Holy Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire had prevented national unity in Italy and Germany. Mussolini early recognised the significance of the victory of Cavour over Garibaldi and Mazzini.

Totalitarian militarism serves the vital social purpose of supplying a non-economic basis of society while leaving unchanged the façade of industrial society. The end is not purely military. To make everybody at all times a soldier is to introduce real equality, or at least a career open to the talents. This policy was not in accordance with the views of the German Army chiefs, who regard a huge conscript army as a military drawback. The merits of the policy are that it abolishes economic privilege, and substitutes the honour code of an army for private profit motives. The appeal is to heroic self-sacrifice, one of the oldest ritual conceptions of mankind. It has captured a large part of the post-war youth in all the totalitarian countries. It is the best, not the worst of the young men who have been so attracted.

But though this kind of sacrifice offers an ideal for the individual, it makes society irrational and senseless, and the majority in these countries know it. "In spite of all propaganda, the masses in totalitarian countries fear war even more than those in the democracies." The spontaneous and general rejoicing of the German and Italian people after the

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Munich accord was enough to prove this. The people are therefore being bled white for objects which are repugnant to them. The governments attempt in vain to escape from this impasse by the persecution or defamation of personified demons, such as the Jews or the communists. The attempt to find a persuasive non-economic motive has after all failed.

Organisation has become an end in itself. A vast bureaucracy drains the revenue and strangles the vitality of the nation. An all-pervasive tyranny recalls the caste system which wrecked the urban civilisation of antiquity. But the masses have no alternative. They must live on parrot-cries which do not persuade them, for they have nothing better to say or do. Every fervid crowd is gripped by hysteria. The war against liberty and religion is a proof of weakness, not of strength; it has its roots in black despair.

“The continued existence of the democracies is the gravest danger to the stability of the totalitarian régime. The two Powers, Germany and Russia, may arrive at an agreement by partitioning Poland.”

“The next decade will decide whether Europe can find the forces which will lead her out of the impasse into which the collapse of economic man has led her, or whether she has to grope her way through the darkness of totalitarian Fascism before she finds a new, positive, non-economic concept of free man.”

In this important book there seem to be some weak points. Drucker heads one chapter “The

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Despair of the Masses.” Organised Labour is far from despairing, at least in Great Britain. It is not easy to believe that the masses in Germany and Italy were so despondent that they welcomed Nazism just because it was purely destructive. Germany was bored with Weimar, just as France was bored with Louis Philippe. The Germans also despise parliamentary Democracy, and like it no better because it comes from England. Drucker thinks they were disappointed with Russian Communism. They never believed in it, and they were in deadly fear, not so much of Communism as of Russia. I have made this plain in another chapter by quotations from Rauschning.

Drucker is also wrong in thinking that the intervention of Italy and Germany in Spain was merely a Fascist plot. It was much more. Lenin had said that Spain would be the first country to adopt Bolshevism, and Stalin had sent Krivitsky to take control of the so-called republican government. A Bolshevik government in the west of Europe, helped by France, was no imaginary danger.

Lastly, Drucker throughout equates liberty and equality, which are unconnected and perhaps incompatible. Amiel wrote in 1870: “France will be socialistic and communistic before it will be able to establish a Liberal republic, because equality is infinitely harder to establish than liberty. The International and the Ultramontanes aim equally at dictatorship.” Of the windy French triad, the

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French value equality, the British liberty, the Americans perhaps fraternity.

The promotion of a non-economic standard of values is in every way desirable. The prospects here are not all discouraging.

Nicholas Berdyaeff has had the unusual experience of being punished both by the Tsarist and the Bolshevik governments. As a theologian he has a European reputation. The intensity of his religious convictions makes his books very impressive, and they throw interesting sidelights on the differences in theology between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. Eastern Christianity is Platonic; the West has been more influenced by Aristotle and Augustine. As a publicist he has written *The End of Our Time*<sup>1</sup> (1933) and *The Fate of Man in the Modern World* (1935). More recently we have had *The Destiny of Man* (1937) and *Slavery and Freedom* (1939).

Things happen in the mind before they are revealed in history. There is something shaken and shattered in the soul of modern man. We are entering the realm of the unknown and un-lived, joylessly and without much hope. We are witnessing the end of the Renaissance, and of the Humanism which was its spiritual basis. Our faith in man is shaken to its foundations. This is a time of spiritual decadence,

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Berdyaeff, *The End of Our Time* (Sheed and Ward), *The Fate of Man in the Modern World* (Student Christian Movement Press), *The Destiny of Man* (Geoffrey Bles Ltd.), *Slavery and Freedom* (Geoffrey Bles Ltd.).

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of loneliness and dereliction. At the beginning of the Renaissance there was a flowering of brilliant genius. Such golden ages usually follow the fusion of two cultures. In this case there was first a Christian Renaissance, in the thirteenth century, and then an efflorescence which we must not call Pagan, but which owed its splendour to the recovery of fragments from the art and literature of classical antiquity. In so far as there was a struggle between the natural and the spiritual man, the natural man won the victory.

The so-called Enlightenment was a pale reflection of the Renaissance, which was finally killed by the mechanisation of modern civilisation. The Renaissance began with a vigorous affirmation of man's creative individuality; it ended with a denial of it. Man is now depersonalised. Liberty, whether of action, speech, or thought, has been wholly destroyed over a great part of Europe. This is the beginning of barbarisation, like that which followed the fall of the West Roman Empire.

It is quite certain that we cannot go back to the discarded ideas of the nineteenth century. Liberalism, Democracy, Socialism and Communism are as much out of date as Conservatism. They all belong to an age which has passed away for ever.

Secularised Christianity is just alive; it has kept us from disintegrating completely. But there is a fundamental antinomy in Humanism; "proud man has drained himself dry." The Reformation brought

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a new spirituality; but it was religiously barren. The French Revolution, Positivism and Socialism were symptoms of the decay of the Renaissance.

What then is the way to escape? The only hope for humanity is a return to Christianity—the Christianity of the persecutions, perhaps even of the catacombs. “Earthly life is beautiful and valuable only when one believes in eternal life.” Asceticism—living in hard training—must once more be held in honour; the nations of Europe must return to a simpler mode of life. Berdyaeff casts a wistful eye on the Church-directed civilisation of the Middle Ages.

In his latest book he reviews the development of his own thought, which, as he admits, contains contradictions, but “contradictions lie at the heart of existence itself.” “The fundamental contradiction in my thinking is bound up with the juxtaposition of two elements—an aristocratic interpretation of personality, freedom and creativeness, and a socialistic demand for the assertion of the dignity of every man. This contradiction is age-long.” “This book is dedicated to the fight against the slavery of man.”

Of his own country he says in *The Destiny of Man*, “we are suffering from the ruin of the Renaissance in its worst form when we have not experienced the Renaissance itself. The happiness of living freely among a free mankind has never been ours. That is our unique and tragic destiny.”

Berdyaeff is one of the most remarkable and original thinkers of our time. But like most Russians

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he is too uncompromising in his judgments. Western civilisation is tougher than he realises. It contains other elements besides the disintegrating products of the Renaissance. There are, as Huizinga says, some living and wholesome forces in our society, apart from religion. As for what he says about a return to the Christianity of the first centuries, nobody would dispute that if we were all as good Christians as a few men and women now are, the world would be a delightful place to live in. But the Founder of Christianity cherished no illusions that "the world" would ever listen to His message. His call was a call to heroism and self-sacrifice. I think, however, that Berdyaeff recognises this when he speaks of the catacombs.

Another criticism is that, as a residue of his period as a Bolshevik, he uses unjustifiable language about the middle class, whom, of course, he labels with the Marxian term of contempt. A vigorous protest should be made against the now fashionable abuse of the Victorian business man. He was not an aesthetic object, and he did not make his surroundings beautiful; but he was hard-working, clean-living, honest and incorruptible. Those who rant about the sickness of an acquisitive society should consider how far these virtues are to be found in non-industrial countries. Bribery, thieving, idleness, and murder for gain are common enough in the romantic East. It was the so-called bourgeois virtues that made England a going concern; if it becomes

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a gone concern, it will be because these virtues are no longer held in honour. Euripides says: "Of the three classes it is the middle that saves the country." On the whole I think he was right.

*L'Europe Tragique* (1934), by Gonzaque de Reynold, is another able book, which arrives at conclusions not very unlike those of Drucker. The author, however, is a Catholic, and not entirely unfriendly to Fascism.

The nineteenth century really continued until the outbreak of the first war. As a form of civilisation the modern world began at the Renaissance and Reformation, and ended in 1914. Liberalism and Socialism, "*ces frères ennemis*," are dead, with their myths of prosperity, progress, and the goodness of human nature. The masses are always "of yesterday or the day before." Ideas when popularised are already out of date. Liberalism, at first an ideal, became a mechanical system.

Since the date which began the new era we may count three generations. The first, who fought, were murdered, mutilated, and ousted from employment, were bitter and went to extremes, some to Communism, others to Fascism. The second, physically and mentally enfeebled, were hard, unsentimental, dissipated, unhappy. The third has ideas and aspirations, but only material. These are the new world. We see them everywhere, keen and ruthless, rushing about in coloured shirts, a mixture

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of soldier, chauffeur, sportsman, cinema actor. They have no scruples and no compunction; they wish to destroy the old world.

We are in a revolution, but near the end of it. Fascism, the new absolutism, may be the social and political form of the new age. As the French Revolution ended in Napoleon, so the present revolution has thrown up a new Caesарism.

Three currents crossed and mixed in the nineteenth century—positivism and naturalism, the great scientific movement; romanticism; optimism. Marx, one of those dangerous men who are dominated by a single idea, was a Jew with apocalyptic dreams of hatred and vengeance. “Half-intellectuals are always seduced by dialectic”; but the communists seldom read Marx himself. In any case, his catastrophic theory has taken its place among unfulfilled prophecies; *Das Kapital* is a “dusty old book for the library of dead ideas.” Syndicalism is more up to date than Marxism; Fascism owes much to Sorel, though it eschews his idea of class war.

Liberalism is “the most agreeable form of government, but the most fragile.” It seemed for a time to have realised the idea of Vigny. “The least bad government is that which is least in evidence, which is least felt, and which costs least.” Liberalism was doomed from the moment when Socialism entered politics. Democracy tried to mediate between them, but was itself devoured by *étatisme*, the omnipotent

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State. To save his essential liberties, the individual is ready to sacrifice his individual rights.

The national State is installed to put an end to disorder and to act by authority. To terminate the struggle of parties, it will suppress, if necessary, the parties themselves; to stop parliamentary confusion, it will suppress, if necessary, the parliaments themselves.

And yet Liberalism, Democracy and Socialism are the three cornerstones on which any new régime must be built. The forms may change, but the spirit of these great experiments must be retained.

It is not necessary to summarise what de Reynold says about Fascism and Nazism; he follows the same line as other writers on whom I have commented. But he points out that the middle class in Germany had been proletarianised by the inflation, and that ninety per cent. of Germans were left without property. It was this class, not the large industrialists nor the workers, who were mainly responsible for the revolution which put Hitler in power.

The general outlook in this book seems to be acute. The author realises the advent of a new Caesarism or Napoleonism, and would not have been surprised to see Bolshevism converted into aggressive imperialism, quite as dangerous to Europe as that of Germany. It is a question of names whether we call this Fascism or not. It involves planning, both for the aggressive State and, as a means of self-defence, for its prospective victims.

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The menace may not be permanent; at present it must colour all our anticipations of the future.

We may now turn to a few selected books by our own countrymen. F. A. Voigt's *Unto Caesar*<sup>1</sup> (1938) had an immediate success, which it well deserved. He makes several points to which other critics of the present situation had not called attention. One reason why Marxism is so entirely out of date is that in spite of his boasted adherence to scientific evolutionism, the mind of Marx was essentially static. The victory of Communism was to be a final consummation, to be brought about catastrophically like the day of the Lord in Hebrew prophecy. This, however, is characteristic of revolutionists. Their first care is to prevent any future revolution. Hence Marx's hatred of all social reformers, of what the Fabians called gradualism. This fierce opposition to the German social democrats led the Bolsheviks to help the middle class to overthrow the Weimar Republic.

“The German Communist Party, the most powerful Communist Party outside Russia, by its combined arrogance and obsequiousness; its stupidity, its amorality, its crude violence, and the sectarian narrowness of its doctrine, brought annihilation to itself and disaster upon its followers.”

He shows, as de Reynold also says, that Hitler was placed in power not by the industrial magnates (a really absurd supposition), but by a revolt of the

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Voigt, *Unto Caesar*, Constable and Company Ltd.

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despised “little man,” who had been ruined by inflation. Nazism is Socialism, but, as Nietzsche and Herbert Spencer saw, Socialism is tyranny.

“It is the younger brother of almost obsolete despotism, having aspirations that are reactionary in the deepest sense, and striving for the downright destruction of the individual, who is regarded as an unjustified luxury of nature, to be improved so as to become a serviceable organ of the collectivity.”

Without Sovietism there would have been no Nazism, though the Soviet is now Fascist. The technique of Nazism is far superior. The doctrinaire element in Bolshevism was its undoing; Nazism enthrones brutish instinct. “Hitler is a man of the people, which neither Marx nor Lenin ever was; he also understands the power of the middle class, which they never did.” Like Nietzsche, this Austrian despises the Germans as “a stupid herd of sheepishly docile people.” “If the last German were to perish, the last pacifist would perish too.” (This is not exactly the opinion of the Germans prevalent in this country.) In one respect Marxian and National Socialist literature resemble each other. “There is not a trace of pity, magnanimity, forgiveness, or any generous feeling, not one word of respect for honour or for righteousness—not one trace of toleration, not the slightest appreciation for a foe who might be brave, or even right in his own way.” This is religious fanaticism, perverted into tribal and sectarian idolatry.

Then comes an interesting comparison between

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Hitler and Mussolini, which now that both are dead is important only to the historian. But the summing up of Hitler's character is worth quoting. "This demoniac creature with the black hair and little black moustache seems like the incarnation of all that he has said about the Jew."

The modern effort to establish universal peace is mainly an English effort. After the first war it was a profoundly humanitarian revolt of the outraged conscience against war and hatred. The movement took unwise forms, such as the desire for "sanctions," a method which might be used with deadly effect against ourselves. As for enforcing peace all over the world, we English could do that only (if at all) by subordinating all our other interests to the one purpose of power-politics. The idea is either disingenuous or quixotic. Nevertheless, Voigt thinks, we must maintain powerful armaments against the risk of attack by Germany.

It is this last paragraph which alone gives me pause. Of course we cannot enforce peace, but as things now are is it worth while to maintain a land army of moderate size in preparation for a possible attack by Russia? This, however, is a matter for experts, and we may suppose that a socialist government would not have resorted to conscription unless the danger appeared to be urgent.

The numerous books of Christopher Dawson deserve close attention. He is an enlightened Roman

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Catholic and a brilliant philosophic historian. I was one of the first to acclaim the importance of his early work, *Progress and Religion*,<sup>1</sup> an opinion which was endorsed by all competent judges. In this book (1929) he speaks of changing "climates of opinion." The ideal man has been at one time the saint, at another the knight, at another the intelligent man, at another the respectable man. Progress was the working faith of the nineteenth century, a kind of Couéism. It was a sort of secularised apocalypticism, a touching faith in human perfectibility, based unconsciously on European hegemony and the universal respect paid to our parliamentary government. Our leading scientists and others exalted progress into a cosmic law. "In that blessed day," wrote Godwin, "there will be no war, no crimes, no administration of justice as it is called, and no government. There will be neither disease, anguish, melancholy, nor resentment. Every man will seek with ineffable ardour the good of all." The dear child! But he was not alone by any means. Thomas Huxley's famous protest, that "social progress means the checking of the cosmic process at every step," marked the turning of the tide. Bertrand Russell, in his "Free Man's Worship,"<sup>2</sup> has sounded a Promethean defiance of God and Nature. The philosophy of progress has ended in disillusionment. Reason, which hoped to explain Nature and man to

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, Sheed and Ward.

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, Allen and Unwin.

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itself, has ended in a kind of rational suicide by explaining itself away. The historians have undermined our belief in the unity of history. So the civilisation of Greece withered away, not from loss of nerve, as Gilbert Murray says, but because the vivid life of the city State faded into a formless cosmopolitan society with no roots. So religions may become corrupted, when the ancient myths, for a time interpreted as symbols, reabsorb the higher forms of religion. This has happened to Buddhism in parts of India and in Tibet.

This disillusionment, which has found vent in revolutionary Socialism, may be compared with the obscure movements of revolt which shook the ancient world in the first and second centuries of our era. The social order was beginning to break down, and the causes were imperfectly understood. It is the same to-day.

“The prosperity of the industrialised societies of the nineteenth century rested on a temporary monopoly of the new methods—on a limited output combined with a continually expanding world-market. To-day these factors are reversed. The new methods are becoming common to the whole world, and the old monopoly of Western Europe is rapidly disappearing. Nowhere has the influence of these new conditions been felt more strongly than in England, where the population has increased far beyond the limits of national agricultural capacity, and the internal power of resistance is weakened alike by national rivalry and disunion and by the social discontent of international labour.”

The wisdom of this diagnosis can hardly be disputed. Capitalism has not failed to deliver the goods;

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it has delivered them with splendid success, but our privileged position is at an end. The British workman has no longer a prescriptive right to higher wages and shorter hours than his Continental rival; and our overpopulated island is in appalling danger of actual starvation after an unsuccessful war.

We cannot follow the author in finding a remedy for our troubles in an "organised spiritual society," the Church of Rome. But a more Christian attitude towards the paraphernalia of life will be forced upon us.

In *Enquiries*<sup>1</sup> (1933) he returns to the charge. "England is faced with the prospect of being the workshop of a world which does not need her services." Our first consideration must be to maintain the quality of our population, "and that cannot be secured by the expenditure of money on the so-called social services, but by the preservation of the natural foundations of society, the family and the land." Dawson thinks that the large town is a social danger. "It was Rome that killed Rome." Wholesome life is life on the land. We need "decentralisation and free association rather than the unitary State and bureaucratic control."

In *Religion and the Modern State*<sup>2</sup> (1935) he says that the evil of industrialism in its latest phase is not individualism, but the sacrifice of the individual to the economic process. We may be governed by

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries into Religion and Culture*, Sheed and Ward.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, Sheed and Ward.

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professional politicians with no stake in the country, who depend for their livelihood on their pay as members of parliament, and therefore have no liberty whatever of private judgment. The Western democracies are not likely to become Communist or Fascist, but they may follow a parallel line of development and evolve a democratic despotism which will destroy human liberty and spiritual initiative as effectually as Communist or Nazi terrorism.

He then discusses the difficult question of the attitude of Christians to this situation. To associate the Church with any political programme is very dangerous. "Nothing is easier than to waste time attacking that form of secularism which happens to be unpopular and consequently the least likely to be restored, while they close their eyes to the real danger." "We find masses of well-meaning people who announce that they will never cease from strife till they have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. But there are so many Jerusalems; there is the Muscovite Jerusalem which has no temple; there is Hitler's Jerusalem which has no Jews, and the socialist's Jerusalem which is all suburbs." "Apparent success often means spiritual failure. Whenever a Church has seemed to dominate the world politically, she has had to pay for it in a double measure of temporal and spiritual misfortune." We are a little surprised by his admission that "the Papal encyclicals have far more

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affinity with those of Fascism than with those of Liberalism or Socialism.” We have observed it with regret. But he is right in insisting that there are no Christian politics and economics. No Church and not many churchmen have gone into party politics without coming out badly smirched.

*Beyond Politics*<sup>1</sup> (1939) develops the author’s message very clearly. There is a totalitarian trend in England which cannot be reconciled with our traditions of liberty and individuality. We are witnessing a change such as the world has never known before; it affects every nation and every continent. The mechanical monster which our civilisation created threatens to devour it. The most disturbing symptom is the growth of inhuman cruelty. “The totalitarian Party is more like a Church than a State.” (Does he see what this means?) “It ruthlessly sacrifices the highest cultural values to the lust of power. Western society is made up of a number of interpenetrating orders, each demanding a limited but independent loyalty.” The result was the mixed constitution which all thinkers, from Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, to Burke and Lecky, have considered the best. The long process of emancipation which began at the Renaissance has come to an end; a sharp reaction in favour of control has set in. The shadow-world of the intelligentsia remains the last refuge of cultural independence, like the last spot of dry land before the rising floods.

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Beyond Politics*, Sheed and Ward.

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Here I think Dawson is too pessimistic. Even in Russia there is an enormous sale of some serious books. In England, cheap editions of our classics are eagerly read; and not only our own classics. One of our best-sellers is old Homer, the prince of story-tellers. A hundred thousand copies of the *Odyssey* in English were quickly absorbed. Dawson thinks that the ruin of our leisured class will also ruin our culture. In future, Darwin may be reduced to collecting beetles, Galton to taking finger-prints. But poverty has not stopped research. The great German philosophers were poorly endowed; Mendel was a monk, Spinoza earned his living as an artisan. I believe there will be a great revival of community life, and that these communities, many of them self-supporting, will keep the torch of learning, science and art burning through the age of vulgarity which some think is coming upon us.

Society transcends politics. In the often quoted words of Burke, it is a spiritual community, "a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are yet to be born."

English society has become much more uniform than it used to be. There is no longer much difference between town and country, or between class and class. The whole of England is inhabited by one gigantic middle class. This may mean only the rule of the herd, but it need not be so. The danger is that when all are on a dead level the dictator may

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see his chance. Equality and freedom are uneasy bedfellows.

At the end he reminds us that Christ, after predicting terrible disasters, added, "When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Dawson's last book, *The Judgment of the Nations*<sup>1</sup> (1943), took him, he says, four years, "years more disastrous than any that Europe has known since the fourteenth century." Looking back, he says that from 1840 to 1870 things went very much as the Liberals had expected. Then for forty years there was an uneasy peace, when a few prophetic voices like Nietzsche and Dostoevski announced the approaching end of the age. During the last thirty years the demons which haunted the brains of these outcasts have become our masters. Civilisation is driving before the storm of destruction like a helmsless ship. The change effected by technology has been too sudden for men to adapt themselves. Science has become the servant of power. We put our faith in evolution. "You forget," said the Devil with a chuckle, "that I have been evolving too." Moral nihilism has combined with fanatical idealism, the revolutionary terrorism of the secret society with the repressive terrorism of the secret police. Britain and America stand to-day as the sole bulwarks of freedom. Liberal Democracy has lost faith in itself even in the West; in other countries there was no Liberal

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Dawson, *The Judgment of the Nations*, Sheed and Ward.

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tradition, and it was rejected as an alien importation. The revolt is real and world-wide. It is partly directed against Christian morals and the humanitarian idealism connected with them. Its birthplace was not Germany, but Russia; Dawson sees a parallel in the invasion of Asiatic ideas in the Western Roman Empire.

Dawson then emphasises the immense importance of the theory of Natural Law, the denial of which is fatal to the democratic State. It has been accepted as a self-evident truth by theologians and lawyers from the beginning of Christianity to modern times. "There is in men," says Thomas Aquinas, "a certain natural law, which is a participation of the eternal law by which men discern good and evil." "The law of nature," says Blackstone, "being coeval with mankind and dictated by God Himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding all over the globe in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this." Machiavelli, in what Dawson excellently calls his Intelligent Man's Guide to Politics, denied that in public affairs there is any absolute right and wrong. So did the Sophists in Plato's time. So did Martin Luther, and so do the totalitarian States. The principle is of fundamental importance, for if there is no Natural Law, binding on all nations as well as on all persons, there can be no international law, no possibility of firm agreements between nations. We are back in the jungle.

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I have shown my high estimate of the value of Dawson's writings by giving him what may seem a disproportionate space in this chapter. Like all Roman Catholics, though he allows himself some freedom to criticise, he has more confidence in Catholic institutionalism as a social force than history seems to warrant. I once said to a friend at Oxford, "If I had to choose between the Black International and the Red, I believe I should choose the Black." He answered, "I think you are wrong. We should soon be through with the Reds, but the Blacks do not let their victims go." But the strength of Roman Catholicism does not lie in its tortuous and cruel methods of policy. Giant Pope has fortunately had his teeth drawn—he would use them if he had them, but that Church can point to a long succession of saints and contemplatives who have done honour to the Christian name.

Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means* (1937)<sup>1</sup> gained great attention both for its own sake and from the celebrity of the author. Although, he says, there is great diversity of opinion as to the means of social progress, the best men are really agreed as to the end which we ought to pursue. Disinterestedness is the ideal. The free man is the disinterested man. (This is the thesis of another very valuable book, Walter Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals*, Allen and Unwin.) This supreme virtue has always been based

<sup>1</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, Chatto and Windus.

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on the belief in a spiritual reality underlying the phenomenal world and imparting to it whatever value or significance it possesses. The Gospel of Christ, for those who have understood Him best, has been a Gospel of disinterestedness, and the same doctrine is found in India, in China, in the Stoics, and in Spinoza.

But instead of advancing towards this ideal goal, the peoples of the world are rapidly moving away from it. At no period has organised lying been practised so shamelessly, and the aim of the liars is the eradication of charitable feelings and decent behaviour. There has been a general retreat from monotheism to idolatry—the worship of some grotesque local divinity. Judged by the only acceptable criterion of progress, the world is in regression.

Political and economic reforms are not enough. They can bring about certain changes, but they are superficial. There must be a change in the individual will. Violence can achieve nothing except the results of violence—counter-violence, suspicion and resentment, and among the perpetrators a tendency to use more violence. A tradition of violence is formed; acts of violence are reckoned heroic and virtuous; recovery from such a condition is slow and arduous.

Since the first war we have heard much of the necessity for a “planned society,” a phrase which the Fabians used in the last century. But the truth is that the planning is designed to transmute free

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countries into the likeness of the dictatorships, organised for slaughter and rapine. The defence of Democracy against Fascism means the transformation of Democracy into Fascism.

The British sea-power was tolerated on two unwritten conditions—first, that we should keep our land army too small to threaten any Continental nation, and second, that we should open our ports to foreign trade. Now we have armed ourselves to the teeth, and closed our ports, just when we have become more vulnerable than ever before. “Greater folly could scarcely be imagined.”

In practice, a planned economy means not only friction with other Powers; it means our subjection to a vast rapacious and tenacious bureaucracy, probably much less competent than private management. Every extension of planning activity takes the country another step towards dictatorship. *Porro, Quirites! Libertatem perdimus.* Why are we in process of throwing away our most treasured possession? Huxley has a plain answer. “No country can be really well prepared for modern war unless it is governed by a tyrant at the head of a highly trained and obedient bureaucracy. The extreme centralisation of power is not only necessary if war is to be waged successfully; it is also a contributory cause of war. The State is made the instrument of an individual’s manias of persecution and grandeur.”

There is thus one villain of the peace—war, mass murder organised in cold blood. It is war, and

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preparations for war, which destroy liberty, stimulate senseless hatred, and fear which is unhappily not senseless; which impoverishes the world and impedes social reforms. It is war which endangers the very existence of civilisation, and may not improbably plunge Europe into another dark age. "Every road towards a better state of society is blocked by war, by threats of war, by preparations for war."

The only remedy is the growth of disinterestedness, of a super-personal consciousness in which the subject-object relation no longer exists. This means mysticism, and Huxley accepts this conclusion without demur. The fruits of mysticism are toleration and charity. It rests on a theory of the ultimate nature of reality, a theory which is common to all the higher religions. There are absolute and eternal values, in which ultimate reality is knowable by us. To follow the good, to revere the true, to love the beautiful—this is the whole duty of man.

The last book which I shall summarise is *The Recovery of the West*<sup>1</sup> (1941) by Michael Roberts. This very able writer seems to belong to the Left wing in politics, since in his discussion of the merits and defects of Democracy he does not mention the main difficulty, that universal suffrage almost inevitably leads to government by mass bribery, an auction of the worldly goods of the unrepresented minority. But on the whole he follows the same lines as others

<sup>1</sup> Michael Roberts, *The Recovery of the West*, Faber and Faber.

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who have been noticed in this chapter. "We must understand that a religious conviction of the reality of right and wrong is the only sure source of national vitality and the only practical alternative to the absolutism of the State." To say that "a war such as that of 1914 serves to lay the foundation of a new expansion and prosperity" is surely a mischievous heresy. But instead of summarising arguments which have already been dealt with, a few isolated aphorisms may give an impression of the treatment of problems in this book.

"As a basis of prophecy Marxism has been a total failure."<sup>1</sup>

"The last twenty or thirty years have been a brilliant age of historical and literary scholarship, and of mathematical and physical discovery."

"The mere mention of leadership is anathema to the doctrinaire democrat."

"Apart from conquest and robbery, the only way to increase the national wealth is to work harder, longer, or more skilfully."

"The average university graduate rejects religion because he compares his childish knowledge of religion with his adult understanding of science and politics. He calls this thinking for himself."

"Between 1871 and 1937 the numbers employed in sport and entertainment rose 2,400 per cent."

"Rascals can prosper as long as other people remain honest, but with each success they damage the confidence on which they were parasitic."

"When I came to survey the evidence, I found the symptoms of decay at once more widespread and less ominous than I expected."

<sup>1</sup> Marx and Lenin were honestly convinced that when once the classless society had been established, the State would "wither away." Nothing could be more contrary to what has happened.

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But there is one chapter in the book which invites more special notice, since the subject has not been treated by the other writers whom I have discussed. The fluctuations in the birth-rate are obviously of great importance to our view of the future of western Europe and of our own country. Roberts claims to have proved that the rate of increase of population depends on the rate of increase of real wages. The ratio has been remarkably constant for nearly a century. In that period the population of Great Britain has been directly proportional to the average value of real income per person in the previous twenty years. The relatively slow rise in real income between 1900 and 1914, the small setback during the war, the subsequent recovery, and the sharp fall in 1931, have all been reflected in the subsequent changes in population. No doubt other factors have been at work. So far as I know, this investigation is original. A consideration of the problem of population is the subject of a later chapter of this book.

I have tried to make a fairly representative selection from a great many books which I have read. Some of the subjects will be dealt with more fully in other chapters. Most of the writers agree that we have really reached one of the great turning points in the world's history. It may be so; but though the historian's business is to carve time at the joints, there are no great sudden changes. Some periods

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are anabolic, when forces are being stored; others are catabolic, when they are being expended. The river of time sometimes seems to flow quietly; at other periods it dashes down in rapids. But every violent action is followed by reaction; the pendulum swings backwards and forwards. This was the view of Machiavelli.

“In all things there is latent some peculiar evil which gives rise to fresh changes. It has been and always will be true that evil succeeds good and good evil, and the one is always the cause of the other. I am convinced that the world has always existed after the same manner, and the quantity of good and evil in it has been constant; but this good and evil keep drifting from country to country, as is seen by the records of ancient empires, but the world itself has remained the same.”

I agree with H. A. L. Fisher that no uniform progression in history is discernible. The vocal classes are now alarmed and pessimistic. So were the aristocrats in the sixteenth century when feudalism was in decay; now it is the middle class who feel that they are doomed. They ought not to despair. The landed gentry, though not the feudal nobility, survived the Wars of the Roses and the Great Rebellion; the learned professions and the traders will not be extinguished by what is happening, though their golden age is over.

Most of my authorities are agreed that the present international anarchy, if it is allowed to go on, must end in the complete ruin of civilisation. The atomic bomb has convinced the few who still thought otherwise. Some have thought of a United States of

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Europe, others of an English-speaking "bloc." Some kind of federation seems indispensable, with a voluntary surrender of complete national sovereignty, unless we prefer the dismal alternative of world-conquest by a single Power.<sup>1</sup> I should have liked to summarise the views of Professor Arnold Toynbee in his great *Study of History*, of which six out of nine volumes have been published. But his conclusions must wait for the appearance of his last three volumes, which he tells me will not be ready for another four years—too late, I fear, for the instruction of an old man of eighty-seven. The problem must be solved, and no solution is yet in sight. There are still some governments which do not reject the idea of war as an instrument of politics. We are not secure against a new era of invasion from the East.

Another question, on which there is less unanimity, is the significance of what the Spanish writer Ortega y Gasset calls the revolt of the masses. It would be ungrateful not to recognise that popular government, aided not a little by the awakened conscience of the minority, has swept away a crowd of intolerable abuses, and has changed a barbarous society with a polished upper crust into a civilised community. There has been some loss, but the gain has outweighed the loss. In some countries the class

<sup>1</sup> Since this book was in type I have read Mr. Reves' *The Anatomy of Peace* (Allen and Unwin), an earnest and eloquent appeal for some supernational authority, respected and obeyed by all. The difficulties are enormous and are not minimised by the author. But the alternative, as he thinks, is the destruction of European civilisation.

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war has been more bitter than with us. We have learnt how to compromise; Democracy, with all its faults, recognises that it cannot exist unless there is an underlying unity which prevents a nation from falling apart into irreconcilable factions. It must be admitted that the fear of foreign conquest has played its part in mitigating social animosities. But, as we are almost tired of hearing, "Power always corrupts." Government by counting heads gives power into the hands of those who, as we have seen, may be tempted to regard their country's extremity as their opportunity. The danger seems to be not so much of violent revolution as of loss of liberty, the subjection of the nation to an interfering and obstructive bureaucracy. Preparations for war may make this inevitable. If this danger is removed, we shall find that the love of freedom, deeply ingrained in the national character, is by no means dead, and experience is a sound schoolmaster, though his fees are high. *Eventu rerum stolidi didicere magistro.* But the danger to Freedom will be dealt with in another chapter.

On one point nearly all my authorities, and others whom I have not quoted, are agreed. We must have a revival of spiritual religion, a change of heart. This may be envisaged as faith in absolute values, or as disinterestedness, the golden rule. The signs are not altogether unfavourable. Mammon, as I have said, has no more prizes to offer. Moloch has shown his hideous face undisguised. We may think again of

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the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. It was accompanied by a growth of spirituality and unworldliness such as the prosperous times of antiquity had never known. "When He slew them they sought Him, and turned them early and enquired after God." This will be the subject of my next chapter.

II

THE SICKNESS OF  
CHRISTENDOM



## II

## THE SICKNESS OF CHRISTENDOM

IT has lately been said that “this grim and ferocious age has distinguished itself by orgies of wickedness so desperate that the twentieth century will for all time be branded as the supreme example of man’s inhumanity.” It is not easy to dispute this verdict. The methods of barbarism in two fratricidal wars have culminated in the atom bomb, a discovery which was being eagerly sought for by all the belligerents, including the Japanese. It is believed that on both sides preparations were made for bacterial warfare—that is to say, for the dissemination of pestilence among the peoples of enemy countries. This is surely the last possibility in diabolism. We talk of progress in humanity. Listen to Plato’s suggestion for laws of war among Greeks. European wars are as much civil wars as those between Athens and Sparta.

“How shall our soldiers treat their enemies? Do you think it right that Greeks should enslave Greeks? Should not their custom be to spare them, considering the danger that the whole race may one day fall under the yoke of the barbarians? We must abstain from spoiling the dead or hindering their burial. Neither must we offer up trophies in the temples of our gods, least of all those of Greeks, if we are to maintain good feeling with other Greeks. We have reason to fear that the offerings of spoils taken from kinsmen may be a pollution. The

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devastation of Greek territory and the burning of houses should be forbidden, for the Greek race is united by ties of blood and friendship. If Greeks are by nature friends, and if both parties destroy the lands and burn the houses of one another, how wicked does the strife appear! There may be reason in the conqueror depriving the conquered of their harvest, but still they should have the idea of peace in their hearts. Any difference which arises among Greeks should be regarded as a quarrel among friends, who intend some day to be reconciled.”<sup>1</sup>

The disillusionment is all the greater after the real progress in humanity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and after the secularised apocalypsim which was the lay religion of that period. Many have thought that we are witnessing the final bankruptcy of Christianity. For the nations engaged in the holocaust were or had been, with the exception of Japan, Christian. The religion of love and peace has had a long innings, and has ended in the spectacular triumph of Antichrist. The angel at the Nativity promised peace on earth; the earth is now a shambles.

One answer, attributed to G. K. Chesterton, and often repeated, is: “Christianity has not failed, because it has never been tried.” If it has never been tried in nineteen hundred years, it must be quite unsuited to human nature. But of course it has been tried. The true apostolic succession is in the lives of saints, of whom there has never been wanting a goodly company.

Those who say that Christianity has failed, or that

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Republic*, Book V, abridged.

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it has never been tried, make three mistakes. The first is that Christ promised a millennium in this world. This notion was widely, almost generally, held during the period of material expansion, when by a complete misunderstanding of Darwin's law of the survival of the fittest it was supposed that there is a cosmic law of progress ending in human perfection. Chiliasm—the belief in a millennium—was part of Jewish apocalypticism; it has tended to revive in periods of optimism. But Christ never promised anything of the kind. Of all religious prophets He was the most discouraging, or rather He made the strongest appeal to heroism and self-devotion. As St. Paul says, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the world-rulers of this darkness, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. It is not worth while to quote the numerous passages in the Gospels where our Lord warns His followers that they have nothing to expect but hatred and persecution.

The second mistake is to identify the Kingdom of God upon earth with the institutional Church, an error which is often traced to Augustine, who did not share it but undoubtedly prepared for it. I once said, rather audaciously, that Churches are secular institutions, in which the half-educated cater for the half-converted. "All the great religions and political edifices," says Amiel, "have crime for their foundation, injustice and fraud for their masonry, and human blood for their cement." Berdyaeff, more

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tolerantly, says that the Church has been obliged to humble itself, to use symbolical language and appeal to lower motives, in order to make its spiritual teaching intelligible to the masses. Christianity was purest when it was fresh from the mint. During the persecutions the life of the Christians seems to have been singularly innocent, very much better than the tone of Pagan society at the time. After Constantine the half-converted swarmed in; the love of power and the temper of bigotry and exclusiveness corrupted the rulers, and the long history of a theocratic empire began its melancholy records. The religion of authority did not quench the religion of the Spirit, which survived in mysticism, sometimes protected and sometimes persecuted by the Great Church; but political Catholicism is intolerant on principle.

The third mistake is the Protestant error of regarding the Old and New Testaments together as an inspired and coherent revelation of divine truth. Until lately—indeed, almost as long as children were taught any religion at all—most parents justified the atrocities of the Hebrews under Joshua on the ground that the Canaanites were abominably wicked. Their religion was certainly corrupt, but what did Josiah find attached to the worship of Yahveh at Jerusalem? The energetic prophet who hewed Agag in pieces was held up to our admiration. It is a comfort now to know that the invading Hebrews did not indulge in wholesale massacre.

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The famous Jewish nose appears in Hittite sculpture; it is certainly not Bedouin. The mischief done by uncritical use of the Old Testament can hardly be exaggerated. Origen was quite justified in saying that if these stories are taken literally, God has been guilty of actions which would hardly be believed of the most ferocious tyrant. When we read the amazing accounts of the hubbub raised by *Essays and Reviews* and by Bishop Colenso's very mild doubts about the historical accuracy of the Pentateuch, we may be thankful that much has been done to remove a scandal; but some of the most unedifying portions of the Old Testament are still read in church, though not in the synagogues, and the bishops are nearly as timid as those who almost unanimously condemned the Essayists and the Bishop of Natal. I remember a debate in Convocation during the first war about the retention of the "cursing psalms" in public worship. These psalms are not used in the synagogues. A prominent dean hoped that they would be retained, because "they express our well-justified feeling towards the Germans." An archdeacon told me afterwards that every intelligent churchman knows that they refer only to our spiritual enemies. Our dignitaries then included those who wished the children of the Germans to "seek their bread in desolate places," and those who wished to dash the children of Satan (not human beings, of course) against the stones. We all know that the Hebraic Bible contains much

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of priceless value; I shall not be misunderstood to forget this.

The truth is that the later Judaism was a different religion from the earlier. One of the most remarkable events in history is the almost simultaneous emergence of a higher religion in China, India, Persia, Greece and Palestine about the middle of the first millennium before Christ. Zarathustra may have lived rather earlier; but the spread of his religion, which some scholars believe modified Judaism, and so even Christianity, very considerably, was almost contemporaneous with the later Jewish prophets, with Confucius and Buddha, with the Ionian philosophers and the Orphics and Pythagoreans in Greece and its colonies. There was a conflict between the spiritual teaching of the prophets, who at times said clearly that God is the God of other nations as well as of Israel, and the fierce nationalism which at last rejected Christ and led to the long martyrdom of the Jewish people.

Our Lord lived, taught and died as a prophet. He seemed to those who heard Him like "one of the old prophets risen from the dead." Some thought He was actually John Baptist, who had just been beheaded. To suppose, with a few recent scholars, that He was a kind of Mahdi, like Theudas, is quite absurd. Resistance is forbidden (Matt. v. 28, xxvi. 52; Luke vi. 29; 1 Pet. iii. 21). Love, not hatred, is the Christian's weapon against evil. This is essential

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Christianity, which if it had been followed would have made this world a paradise.

It is a disputed question whether, or in what sense, our Lord claimed to be, or believed Himself to be, the promised Messiah, the restorer of the Kingdom of David. My own opinion is that the chief priests denounced Him to Pilate as a political agitator, and invented or perverted sayings of His which bore this interpretation, but that they knew very well that the charge was false. Pilate knew it too; he was not the man to be content with one execution if he had thought that there was trouble brewing. To suppose that our Lord meditated a rising, accompanied by a few peasants and women from Galilee, is surely ridiculous. He was no Messiah, but “the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee.” The inscription on the Cross was a joke of Pilate’s, intended to annoy the Jews, who had compelled him to kill a man whom he believed to be a harmless fanatic.

The Apocalypse, which probably incorporates Jewish prophecies, does depict a warlike Messiah-Christ. But the early Christians understood the Gospel. In spite of bitter persecution, they never thought of rebellion or revolution.

We are told that the infant Church certainly expected a catastrophic end of the age; that this expectation pervades the New Testament; that there is nowhere any thought of a long duration of the Church on earth; and that in consequence it is

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useless to look for any social teaching in the Gospels. An *interimsethik*—a stop-gap morality while the Church waited for the expected return of Christ in glory—that is all that we can hope to find; and as the expectation was not fulfilled, the Gospels, we are told, as a guide to conduct, have very little value, except in purely personal matters. There is no doubt that the first Christians did expect an early termination of the present order of things. But such beliefs, as we know from our own attitude towards the future life, are usually held rather limply, except as a rationalisation of the faith that, in our Lord's words, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him," or of the hope which rings through the Old Testament, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The moral sense creates belief in retribution for individuals, but the notion that dreams of the future make men indifferent to the things of this life implies a state of mind which is not, I think, so common as is often supposed. Christianity began as a profound spiritual illumination, which was probably rather more collective than is sometimes supposed, for "it takes two to tell the truth, one to speak and one to hear"; but I do not think we can account for what happened unless we believe that the Master made an overwhelming personal impression upon His disciples, quite independently of any expectation of a cosmic cataclysm. This overwhelming impression took the form of Messianism among His Jewish

followers; in the Hellenistic world it attached to itself the conception of the Logos, and heaped honours upon the divine "Lord" of the Church's worship.

The Lutheran separation of public and private morals is utterly false and pernicious. We are told that the Greek word for "enemy" shows that Christ was thinking only of private quarrels. In classical Greek there are two words—*polemios*, the Latin *hostis*, for a public enemy, *echthros*, the Latin *inimicus*, for a private enemy. But in New Testament Greek this distinction is not observed; *polemios* is not used at all. It is true that our Lord uses military metaphors; in Matt. xxiv. 3 He refers to house-breaking, without giving His approval to burglary.

Christianity is not purely individualistic. The Kingdom of God, as St. Paul says in one of the few places where he uses the phrase, is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. But righteousness and peace are social ideals. The Gospel is incarnational. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount."

I have said that the birth of Christianity is unintelligible unless we believe that the historical Jesus impressed those who lived with Him as God made manifest in the flesh. The personal religion of St. Paul rested on the identification of the indwelling Spirit of God, of whom as a mystic he was profoundly conscious, with the living and glorified Jesus. This identification, it must be remembered,

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was made by one who was in touch with our Lord's chief disciples, who had been with Him during His ministry. "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." It has been the core of Christian faith ever since. Christ's last recorded words were: "I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world."

This emphasis on religious experience as the seat of authority obviously alters the centre of gravity in apologetics. The traditional approach is from miracle to faith. We used to be told that our religion stands or falls with the discovery of the empty tomb. This is a disastrous line of argument, for not only does a miraculous event require a cogency of evidence which from the nature of the case is not to be had, but it is not clear how the resuscitation of a dead body can prove anything either as to the divinity of Him who was restored for a few days to earthly life, or how this miracle can guarantee our own participation in eternal life, since our bodies will return to dust. Miracle, many of us now believe with Goethe, is the child, not the parent of faith. We believe that Christ rose because we feel and know that He is risen. "I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." The details of what happened nineteen hundred years ago are not essential to our faith as Christians, and certainty about them is not available.

This raises the question how far Christianity is, as is often said, a historical religion. By a historical

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religion I mean a religion which places its credentials in the actual occurrence of particular events in the past, or of a confident expectation of events in the future. We may also call historical the theory of history which finds in the course of events the evolution of an immanent Spirit to whom divine honours are paid. These are varieties of a type of religion which has distinctive characteristics of its own; and though the large majority of those who hold it are not philosophers, it will be found to involve a philosophy of time and a valuation of history which are highly controversial. Our attitude towards religion must logically depend on what we mean by history, and on the degree of importance which we attach to it.

The Greeks did not “take time seriously.” There was never a chair of history at Athens or Alexandria. The prevailing belief was that the course of the world revolves in great cycles. History not only resembles itself; it literally repeats itself. There can be no progress or retrogression in the whole, but only a combination and disintegration of the primordial elements of which the world is composed. The ancients believed that they were living in a downgrade period; sometimes they looked forward to a return of the golden age. Virgil, in a time when “no war or battle sound was heard the world around,” hoped that it might be coming soon.

The world-view of the Jews was different. The righteousness of God must be vindicated, in spite of

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apparent miscarriages of justice. Every possible solution was tried in turn; at last, strangely late in their history, another world is brought into existence to redress the balance of the old. History for the Jews was a theodicy; "against hope they believed in hope." But for them deliverance was catastrophic and supernatural; they had no belief that Time in itself is friendly.

The Christian Church inherited these two traditions, neither of which gave any encouragement to evolutionary optimism. The cosmology of the Church was a cramped picture, marked by four irruptions of supernatural power—in the creation; in the penalty for Adam's fall; in the redemption of the world through Christ, and in the final destruction of the world by fire and the last judgment. No Christian till quite lately looked forward to a long life for humanity on this earth. Millennial expectations, which broke out from time to time, were not in the main current of Christian thought. The great assize would make a final adjustment of earthly injustice, but there is no more history in eternity. The conditions of the saved and of the lost are both static. Of the lost, Dante says in a terrible line, "*Questi non hanno speranza di morte.*" "These have no hope of death." The Catholic philosophy of history is not evolutionary.

Historicism therefore is a modern phase of thought; it is neither Greek nor Jewish nor Christian. It rejects both the old theory of cycles and the

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belief in occasional supernatural interventions, which is most unacceptable in an age of science. An Anglican modernist writes:

“Christianity is absolute, not in the sense that it is without analogy, but in the sense that it is the highest point in a continuous gradation. The salvation wrought by Christ is not a catastrophic intervention, but a supreme revelation of what is henceforth seen to be the ideal for all things.”

This is a totally different view from that of traditional Christianity. The older view is that these wonderful events are important because they interrupted the course of nature; the later view is that they are important because they did not. The dualism of nature and supernature is abandoned. Nevertheless, Hellenistic Christian theology is not so far from modern thought. The religious philosophy which underlies and inspires the Fourth Gospel is sacramental. The Incarnation altered nothing in the counsels of God, but by a dramatic representation brought these counsels to light, and so opened a new chapter in human history. It kindled a fire which will never be put out. The Church taught that there was no accession of dignity (as there was even in St. Paul’s thought) to a divine Being as the result of anything done by Him in time. He received “the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.” His work on earth is carried on by the Holy Spirit, who continues the Incarnation under another mode, and undertakes the gradual education of the human race. Thus, in the Fourth Gospel,

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for the first time perhaps, the idea of a progressive revelation is adumbrated, and a real Incarnation is set in the framework of continuous history.

This conception deprives a catastrophic event of its uniqueness; it is no longer valued as being isolated and unparalleled, but as having a meaning and importance within a system. Lessing's words are well known. "Religious doctrines cannot be deduced from historical facts without a transition to another plane, which vitiates the whole process. Unrepeated insulated facts can least of all testify to the untransitory and everlasting." The proof of a past event consists in inferring from something which we know or believe to something analogous to it. If there is no analogy, no evidence can establish the fact. If the alleged event ceases to be coherent with the system of which it forms a part, it either ceases to be credible or becomes a problem for natural history or the science of medicine.

Essential Christianity is invulnerable. It springs ever fresh in the hearts of men. For there is, as the mystics taught, a soul-centre which can never consent to sin, a spark, as they said, kindled at the altar of God Himself. Dogmatic materialism and materialistic dogmatism, those angry brethren who fought each other so fiercely when science erected a philosophy on naïve realism, and religion buttressed itself on acts of God which suspended the laws of nature, are both dead and buried. But God reveals Himself only to the pure in heart. "The world"

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knows Him not. There never has been and never will be a crowd collected at the narrow gate. The Churches may collect a crowd, but only by making unholy alliances. The Church on earth is always militant, never triumphant, and too often it fights only for its own hand.

As for progress, there are periods of progress, and what look like dark nights. We may hope that some evil customs will be given up; some have been given up. We no longer eat our enemies or enslave their children, or examine witnesses on the rack, or burn those who attend a different church. War must be the next abomination to go. But there is no law that change must be for the better, no one increasing purpose, in Tennyson's odd phrase, so far as we can see. There can hardly be a unitary purpose in the whole vast universe. Rather we may think of an infinite number of finite purposes, each having a beginning and end, which when they are achieved take their appointed place in the timeless eternal order. The meaning of history is superhistorical. Time, like space, is only the canvas on which we draw our pictures of external reality. The ultimate values are timeless, and so, it is worth remembering, are some of our intellectual activities, such as mathematics. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." An unpopular text, if we forget the word "only."

If I am right in thinking that we are at the beginning of a time of troubles, there will be a

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revival of religion. But will it be the true religion? Wars and revolutions stimulate the lower kinds of religion and depress the higher. We have seen already a revival of the most abject superstitions. There are grounds for hope, but none, I fear, for confidence.

I have used the words “essential Christianity,” and may seem to have meant by this expression unattached mysticism, the “testimony of the Holy Spirit,” which may be claimed, for example, by pious Buddhists. A religion which is no religion in particular is too much like a language which is no language in particular, a sort of spiritual Esperanto. The question, What is Christianity? remains to be answered.

“The imitation of Christ” is an answer which springs to our lips. We are to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life. But this does not mean that we are called to be wandering preachers, nor to conform our habits to those of Syrian peasants. Nor can we take as our model the life of the cloistered saint who wrote the immortal book which bears this title. Nor is this all. Lives of Christ are a comparatively recent type of devotional literature. None of them is really satisfactory. The materials for a biography of the modern kind do not exist. The Gospels, and least of all the Fourth, do not fulfil these conditions. Although the historical value of the Synoptic Gospels is in my opinion much greater than “advanced” critics are inclined to think, they are

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the creation of the faith and love of the Church, and were written to serve the ends of teaching, of public worship, and of controversy. The German "form-criticism" may have gone too far, but we have unfortunately no Boswell who wrote down the words of the Master just as he heard them. It must further be admitted that those who in our day have written lives of Christ have had their own ideals of the perfect human life, and have painted our supreme Example in colours borrowed from those ideals. We have seen the Prince of Peace pictured as the founder of a world empire, the lay prophet decked in the robes of a high priest; we have even seen Him Who refused to arbitrate in a dispute about property, and Who never showed any interest in economic questions, portrayed as a communist agitator. These and other distortions, natural and pardonable as some of them are, are so many obstacles to a real understanding of the Galilean ministry.

The choice of merely human models is hardly less difficult. At various times the ideal Christian has been an emaciated ascetic like the hermits of the Thebaid; a cloistered contemplative like Suso or John of the Cross; a valiant soldier of the Church, willing to die and to kill for his faith, like St. Louis of France; a hammer of the heretics like Athanasius, a rigid Puritan moralist, not slothful in business; the apostle of some good cause, like William Wilberforce and Florence Nightingale. Can we

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recognise any definite principle which inspired such different types of human character? Or must we admit that Christianity is the collective name for all the moral and spiritual movements that have appeared during nearly two thousand years among peoples of European origin? Is it, broadly speaking, the religion of that part of the human race in whom the great streams of Hebrew faith and Graeco-Roman culture joined their fertilising waters? Is there anything which distinguishes what is genuinely Christian in our civilisation from the independent humanistic movements which in many minds are a substitute for the religion of the Churches?

Ever since the Renaissance the question has been discussed whether Christianity is essentially a world-renouncing or a world-accepting creed. It is a problem which cannot be solved by simply assenting to one alternative or the other, but it does affect in many ways what we believe to be our duty. Asceticism has entered far too deeply into the Christian life to be dismissed as a mistake, and yet few among the most earnest disciples of Christ in our day wish to go beyond such self-discipline as may help us to overcome our temptations and to run the race that is set before us like athletes in good training. The question is closely connected with the attitude of our religion towards sex, and many think that in this field we are fighting a losing battle.

Our Lord Himself, like other wandering prophets, remained unmarried, and no doubt the verse which

misled poor Origen means that some people are called to the single life "for the kingdom of heaven's sake." But there is no rigorism of this kind in His recorded teaching; the three sins which moved His indignation were hypocrisy, hard-heartedness, and calculating worldliness. He even had more hopes of disreputable sinners than of the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." These words are an example of the half-humorous irony which belongs to a wise and sane teacher, and never to a deluded fanatic, as some have supposed Him to have been.

The emphasis in St. Paul's teaching is rather different. The cities of the Hellenistic world, among which he worked, were far more corrupt than the towns and villages of northern Palestine. Corinth, a seaport, may have been no better than Port Said. But besides this, there was already beginning a movement towards greater purity of life, especially among the Stoics. We find it in Musonius Rufus, Dion Chrysostom and Epictetus. St. Paul goes no further than any Christian ought to approve. Married people ought not to live apart. We must keep our bodies "in sanctification and honour," because they are temples of the Holy Spirit. "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." We are in training for a race, for an incorruptible crown, and "every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." I suppose St. Paul had not read Plato, but he repeats, almost in the same

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words, the exhortation to chastity in Plato's *Laws*. Many athletes, Plato says, have lived in continence during their training, though they were uneducated men, "much lustier in their bodies" than those whom he addresses. They did it to win garlands at the games; shall we not do as much to win a far nobler reward?

The ascetic is the athlete of religion. Almost of necessity the Church tolerated what we may call a pass school for the majority, while a few aimed at higher honours. There is hardly any religion in which ascetic discipline has not been preached. In India it has been carried to extremes; Buddha tried in vain to mitigate its excesses. The Jews, except the Essene sect, did not practise sexual asceticism; but fasting had become a rite long before our Lord's time. In Egypt the priests of Isis were celibates and vegetarians; the Pythagoreans enjoined vegetarianism and periods of silence and continence. The Roman Vestals were virgins, under penalty of being buried alive, and the priestesses of Delphi were virgins.

The disciples of our Lord did not fast while He was with them; some of them were married; their Master "came eating and drinking." Allusions to fasting have been interpolated in manuscripts of the Gospels, just as incidents which seemed possibly unedifying, like the story of the woman taken in adultery, and of the man working on the sabbath, which is found in the Codex Bezae, hovered half in and half out of the Canon.

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As time went on, the emphasis on virginity rose so high that it seemed to be the main characteristic of Christianity. It was the specifically Christian virtue. The language which several of the Christian Fathers, notably Jerome, use about marriage, is most repulsive, and to us quite unintelligible. It is partly asceticism and partly a kind of *tabu* morality. There is something mysterious or uncanny about the beginning and end of life, which Nature has associated with circumstances in the one case offensive to modesty, and in the other horrible. So men have always felt. The production of life and the taking of it are acts which evoke the sentiment of awe; those who are engaged in the service of the Deity must be ceremonially pure.

It is a mistake to suppose that this strange horror of a natural function was the fruit of Christianity. It entered the Church through Gnosticism; and though Church discipline regarded adultery, with apostasy and murder, as one of three sins for which no forgiveness on earth must be sought, it does not seem that sexual abstinence was widely practised in the Dark Ages. Lea's *History of Clerical Celibacy* gives quite the opposite impression. During this period and long afterwards it was customary to provide a priest with a "priestess," as she was sometimes called, for the protection of his parishioners. Since the Counter-Reformation this scandal has disappeared, except, I believe, in parts of South America. Most Roman Catholics still feel a kind of

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disgust at the idea of a married priest, and the official doctrine of that Church still is that virginity is a higher state than marriage. The Gospels clearly imply that Joseph and Mary had a large family; but the Catholic doctrine is that the mother of Jesus was miraculously protected—we need not go into details—from the loss of her physical virginity. Nothing makes a Catholic more angry than to say that James and Joses and Simon and Judas were probably the children of Mary. In the Eastern Church, as is well known, a parish priest must be married.

This is one instance in which modernity has almost unanimously rejected the Catholic tradition. Marriage for us is the right of all and the duty of most. Our care for posterity is a remarkable proof that we are not “windowless monads,” but members of a body. It is significant that Catholics will have nothing to do with the study of eugenics, though there are passages in the Gospels, such as “a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,” which have been quoted with approval by eugenists.

As regards extra-matrimonial connections, the Eastern Church has always been less rigorous than the Western, but the sinfulness of such indulgence has been acknowledged by all Christian bodies. The reason is that given by St. Paul. The rule has never been even approximately observed, though a recent American questionnaire showed that nearly half the men who answered the questions had lived continently before marriage. The proportion of women

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who could not say the same, though smaller, was surprisingly large. There will always be some who will say, "Why make a fuss and a tragedy about one of the simplest of human needs?" To which the answer is that this appetite, which is much stronger than is necessary for the perpetuation of the species, must be controlled and disciplined. If this is not so, almost all moralists, from Plato to our own day, have been wrong.

We must however treat with respect the opinion of some medical psychologists that repression of this instinct is harmful to body and mind. The best medical opinion, so far as I have been able to ascertain, is that in the majority of cases continence does no harm at all, provided that the thoughts are controlled. But there are certainly exceptions among men of high character. For example, the cause of the unhappiness of Henri François Amiel is made very plain in the unexpurgated edition of his *Journal Intime*. I have myself been consulted in one or two such cases, and have strongly recommended marriage.

The increase of adultery and divorce is worldwide, and is rightly felt by all Christians to be a scandal. The main reason seems to be the romantic idea that marriage is not a pledge of lifelong fidelity, but a declaration of love or physical attraction. When estrangement follows, it is said that the marriage is virtually dissolved, and the pair had better part. I am very reluctantly driven to the

opinion that all marriages should be legally settled in a register office, and that only those who accept the Christian view of marriage should be married in church. It would then be recognised that those who have taken vows of faithfulness to each other, "for better and for worse, till death us do part," have made the most sacred and solemn pledge "in the sight of God," and that a man who deliberately violates this contract has committed a most disgraceful act, and has forfeited for ever his right to be treated as a gentleman. The condemnation of an unfaithful wife would be equally severe. But the question is not a simple one. There are very hard cases; and if, as the saying is, hard cases make bad law, it is a bad law which multiplies hard cases. It was a cleric who said, "Two cats tied together by the tails are not a very good symbol of the unity which subsists between Christ and His Church." But I am very far from thinking that most marriages are unhappy, and I fear that the knowledge that the tie is no longer indissoluble may sometimes weaken the obligation to make the best of each other without which no close association of human beings can be successful.

As for perversions, which are certainly becoming more common, and in Germany under Wilhelm the Second and in the Weimar Republic were notoriously practised by many men in high positions, I have just this to say. Many writers, including some who have made a study of "Psychopathia Sexualis,"

have urged that all such cases are pathological, and that delinquents should be treated as abnormal persons who cannot be held morally responsible for their actions. No one who has any acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, or with what travellers have told us about non-Christian and especially about Mohammedan countries, can possibly hold this view. The offender is usually quite sane and normal; he is only immoral. I am not in favour of punishing vice as crime; but I am sure that a stern moral censure ought to be passed on these practices, and that of course the criminal law ought to protect the young of both sexes.

This is a very superficial and imperfect summary of my views on a most difficult subject, which I have treated at much greater length in my *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*, published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton in 1930. In this chapter I am only dealing with the question whether the sickness of Christendom is very apparent in the relations between the sexes. It is extremely difficult to say. The exaggerated honour paid to virginity in the early Church was part of a world-renouncing movement, not peculiar to Christianity, though most emphasised in what was called the religious life, the life of the cloister. It captured the Church at a time when civilisation was crumbling. The prospects for secular culture seemed almost hopeless. Plato's ideal commonwealth had taken refuge in the clouds. "The world is very evil, the times are

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waxing late." The magnificent hymn "*Dies irae, dies illa*" breathes the spirit of the Middle Ages. We, who believe that our tenancy of this planet will probably last for many thousands of years, cannot regard with repulsion the means which God and Nature have provided for the continuance of our species. We must look on this development of asceticism as an aberration. It has no essential connection with purity.

The contrast between the rigorism of doctrine and the unbridled licentiousness of practice is one of the things which make the Dark and Middle Ages so hard to understand. It was said by the opponents of the Reformation that Protestantism led to a depravity in morals, and certainly Luther was a great offender both by example and precept. But Puritanism inculcated a strictness which was very widely observed. It was still strong in England in the last century, though the upper classes had set a very bad example in the earlier decades. I am disposed to think that in these matters the middle class under Queen Victoria maintained a higher standard of morality in the restricted sense than can be found in any previous age since the persecuted Church of the second century. There has been a reaction. Periods of strictness and of licence seem to alternate, and the effect of war on social purity is notorious. Those who have studied the subject found that commercialised vice had declined rapidly before the wars. The rather pitiless attitude of respectable

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society towards fallen women has been much modified. It was not the attitude of Christ Himself.

To sum up, I think the social condonation of adultery is a real defeat of Christianity. Otherwise I see no clear indication of a decline in practice, apart from the temporary setback in consequence of the war. If public opinion now regards the sins of the flesh as less hateful than hypocrisy, hard-heartedness and worldliness, we may perhaps think that this marks a return to the Christianity of the Gospels.

I have said little about asceticism except in connection with sex. In its traditional forms it is hardly a living question for us. But I am strongly in favour of a simpler mode of living, and of that constant though not severe self-discipline which even William James recommends. "Do something every day for no other reason than because you don't want to do it." Our Lord set a very small value on the accessories of life. The Western nations value them far too much.

We have now to consider another aberration which has done true Christianity far more harm than the excessive mortification of the flesh. I have no wish to speak disrespectfully of the Church of Rome. I have Roman Catholic friends, and in my opinion the Neo-Thomist school is doing valuable work on the philosophy of religion. But I fear Bishop Creighton was right when he said: "Since the triumph of the Church the ecclesiastical

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organisation has everywhere gone astray. The Roman Church is the most complete expression of Erastianism, for it is not a Church at all but a State in its organisation, and the worst form of States, an autocracy."

Those who misapply the proverb which made such an impression on Newman, *securus iudicat orbis terrarum*, have agreed that the development of the infant Church into an imperialistic theocracy was historically inevitable and therefore justified. "The Church has changed, no doubt," says Loisy, "but if you want to prove the identity of a grown man with the infant he was thirty years ago, you do not try to squeeze him into his cradle." If we believe that our Lord did not wish His Church to perish, we must assume that He approved of the only way in which it could survive.

I have expressed my dissent from this kind of historicism. An institution like an individual may lose its own soul in trying to gain the world. It is most unlikely that the gifts of the Spirit are canalised in a single institution, and all the evidence is against such a supposition. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is our Lord's test, and it is the only test which we can apply. Lord Acton, the great Roman Catholic historian, is as emphatic as any Anglican can desire. "By plausible and dangerous paths men are drawn to the doctrine of the justice of history, of judgment by results, the nursling of the nineteenth century, from which a sharp decline leads to *The*

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*Prince*" (of Machiavelli). History seems to show (as I once wrote) that the powers of evil have won their greatest triumphs by capturing the organisations which were formed to defeat them, and that when the Devil has changed the contents of the bottles he never alters the labels. The Roman Church may be regarded as the last chapter in the history of the Roman Empire, which perpetuated itself in a marvellous fashion in the institution which it first tried vainly to destroy, and then tried only too successfully to capture.

No serious scholar believes that Christ while on earth had any thought of founding an institutional Church, in which the "overseers" (*episcopi*) and "presbyters" were to enter into the prerogatives of the Jewish priesthood. There was not a single priest among His disciples. The verse in Matthew, "tell it unto the Church," with its contemptuous reference to the publicans, its appeal to a non-existent Ecclesia, and its most un-Christlike tone, is an audacious forgery, interesting only as showing how early the famous words of Cyprian, "outside the Church there is no salvation," had begun to be heard. And yet it was the most intelligent emperors who seem to have believed that there was something dangerous in the Third Race, as they called the Christians. The Roman government was as a rule very tolerant; it never compelled the Jews, who were potentially disloyal, to sacrifice. In the third century the emperors were really alarmed at the growing power of the

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Church, and the complete failure of the last persecution led to a concordat which was really a surrender.

Wars nearly always leave scars on the victors. The Church was stiffened by its conflicts with heresy, and hardened by the persecutions. Dante, in speaking of "the first rich Pope," anticipates Creighton's verdict on the disastrous victory of the fourth century. There were humiliations from the first. Constantine, still unbaptised, presided at the Council of Nicaea, and was hailed as "bishop of bishops." But from that time to this the priestly Caesars in the Vatican followed the same course as the Roman Empire, which from a republic became a benevolent despotism, and then a Sultanate. We have been so used to the advance of popular government that we used to regard the Papal autocracy as a belated anachronism. But now that Democracy has been discarded except in a few countries where politics and politicians are not much respected, the case is not so clear. The claims of the Popes culminated in 1870 with the decree of infallibility, so tamely accepted. This virtually makes the Pope independent of tradition, as Pius IX recognised. One step only remains—to allow the Pope to nominate his successor. But this will never be conceded; for of all experiments in constitution-making the elective Papacy is one of the most successful.

During the Dark Ages the Catholic Church in the West discharged a useful function, not only preserving a higher religion in a time of decadence but

winning the respect of the barbarians, and saving what could be saved from the wreck of civilisation. The first Renaissance, in the time of Dante and the Schoolmen, was a religious rebirth. After the secular Renaissance it may be doubted whether Catholicism as a factor in civilisation has not done as much harm as good.

Such an institution has great survival value, but it provokes violent hatred. Such exclamations as “*Écrasez l’infâme*” and “*Le cléricalisme, voilà l’ennemi*” do not proceed from the worst men. They would sound strange in this country, where the Anglican Church has few if any interests except the spiritual welfare of the people of England. It has to fear contempt and indifference, not hatred. There is happily no Church vote in our politics.

There are some who think that an international organisation like Catholicism may be a remedy for the disastrous excesses of nationalism. As a religious influence this may be true; but as a political power there is no reason why the Catholic Church should not ally itself with any dominant party except downright Communism. There are two countries which lie geographically outside the Latin sphere of influence—Ireland and Poland. In both, the Catholic Church has made use of virulent national hatreds, too well justified in the case of Poland. I fear that political religion must be condemned as radically un-Christian, though its growth may have been inevitable.

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In our own country the problem exists in a less extreme form. We have our own political churchmen, who wish to gain the support of the strongest party in our State. Their motives are not entirely the result of a wish to enlist popular sympathy for the Church, and the question must be considered if possible without prejudice.

The Gospel is a creed of spiritual redemption, not of social reform. It proclaims a standard of values which would take the sting out of all social strife. Nevertheless, though the simple mode of living, such as our Lord knew among the peasants and small tradesmen of Galilee, is regarded by Him as the most favourable for the spiritual life, the Gospel has never been ascetic where the wants of others are concerned. Is it not true that when our faith in divine justice is shaken, it is the sufferings of others, rather than our own, that give us trouble? The law of love is supreme in all relations of life.

There was no organised Communism in the early Church. The voluntary sharing of goods mentioned in the Acts was a very different thing, and the "poor saints" in Palestine were soon obliged to beg for subscriptions from the "capitalists" of Macedonia and Greece. There was no expectation of social reform, and certainly no wish that the barbarians would destroy the Empire. The early Fathers were astonishingly loyal. There was no glorification of trade or industry, which were languishing from causes which had nothing to do with religion. In

fourth-century homiletics there is a good deal of rhetorical Socialism, which was really only an illustration of the Christian law of love, a moral duty, not a political programme.

We can hardly give too much importance to the Stoical doctrine of a Law of Nature. The Roman lawyers all accept it, though they are not altogether agreed as to its contents. It was early recognised that the ideal Law of Nature was not and could not be fully obeyed in any human society. The Christian doctrine was that the perfect Law, under which there would be no war, no police, no private property, must be regarded as impracticable, though it might be obeyed in the monasteries by those who have retired from the world. There is a relative law of Nature, adapted to man's fallen state, which recognises the civil power and its institutions. In the sight of God all men are by nature equal—the famous dogma of the Stoics; but this carries with it only what is called in modern times equality of consideration, not economic equality. Slavery, which, it must be remembered, was a moribund institution, no longer of much economic importance, was not condemned; but the Christian must regard his slaves as brothers in Christ.

In the Dark Ages, as I have said, the Church rendered great and necessary service to society. The Middle Ages, which ought never to be confounded with the Dark Ages, had an interesting though very perplexing civilisation of their own. The virtues of

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feudalism were knightly courage and protection on the one side, loyalty on the other. The Russian peasants before the revolution protested reasonably that when the "barons" no longer protected them by military service, the unwritten contract between them lapsed.

Thomas Aquinas, accepting the principle of a relative law of Nature, believes in a mixed constitution hierarchically ordered. It is right that the superior should rule, but it does not follow that those who actually rule are really superior. The mediaevals are refreshingly strong against the power of the State. "In the court of conscience," says Thomas Aquinas, "there is no obligation to obey an unjust law." Some of them, like Marsilius of Padua, condone assassination of a tyrant. The civil power derives its authority from God, but its power is limited by the social contract, and if power is abused it may be resisted. Thus Catholic casuistry opened one door to rebellion. It is needless to say that the frenzied patriotism of the modern nationalist was quite foreign to the Middle Ages.

I have no space to consider in detail the social changes at the Reformation. Luther was a Church reformer, in some ways a reactionary. He wanted Protestantism for good Catholics, as Jefferson in America wanted democracy for good aristocrats. His disastrous dual morality has been mentioned in other chapters. But Calvin has been a favourite Aunt Sally with our Christian socialists, who have

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accused him of presenting Christianity in a form which is aesthetically repulsive, and calculated to excite the just indignation of the underdog. It is suggested that much of the unpopularity of Christianity is due to its immoral alliance with capitalism.

John Calvin was a Frenchman from Picardy, which had been full of Lollards and Hussites. He was trained in the law, and was a good classical scholar, the editor of Seneca's essay on Clemency. As a convert to Protestantism he was driven from Paris, where he had been lecturing, and took refuge in Switzerland, where he published, at Basle, his famous *Institute of the Christian Religion*. In 1537 he went to Geneva, still a young man of twenty-seven. Under his influence Geneva became the citadel of the Reformation.

Geneva was a small country town, not an industrial centre. Before Calvin came it abounded in sumptuary laws which were not often enforced. But when he was recalled after being banished, he made great efforts to restore the discipline of the early Church. Lutheranism had been accused of condoning laxity; no such charge should be brought against Geneva.

What concerns us here is what has been called intra-worldly asceticism. A man's "calling" is part of his duty towards God; honesty and diligence are sacred obligations. Moreover, a steady self-control, extending over the whole of our life, is prescribed.

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No self-indulgence beyond what is necessary or useful is free from sin. Idleness is a disgrace.

It is quite a mistake to say that Calvinism encourages either luxurious expenditure or shady methods of business. The exact opposite is true. Nor does it seem to be true that it discourages art and the love of beautiful things. The Puritans in Cromwell's time—Milton and his family, for example—were by no means uncultivated. But it is true that what Matthew Arnold called the Hebraic as opposed to the Hellenic side of Christianity was accentuated by Calvin. The unsightly boards inscribed with the Decalogue which still disfigure the chancels of some of our churches are a survival of the influence which Calvinism once exercised in the Church of England.

It has been often said that the virtues on which Calvin laid stress are precisely those which lead to honourable success in business. The Levellers of the seventeenth century were not Calvinists, nor were the Utilitarians and “Manchester men” of the nineteenth. To give a quantitative value to our higher interests is to break up Calvinism, and Calvin never thought of preaching economic equality. In modern times he would perhaps have been a Tory democrat, certainly not either a socialist or a friend of “big business.”

In some ways the Quakers—though Calvin was no mystic—are good examples of the way of life which he inculcated. There is an absurd story of how one of the Gurneys persuaded the Rothschild of the

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day to attend a Quaker service. The Spirit moved no one; they sat in silence. As they came out the Jew said, "Now I know why you Quakers do so well in business; I never made so much money in three-quarters of an hour before." But this is most unfair to the Quakers.

Are we to condemn Calvinism if the deceitfulness of riches corrupted some adherents of this stern and unbending Christianised Stoicism? Calvin was surely right in maintaining that trade and commerce are legitimate occupations for a Christian; it was only later that local and transient conditions made the rewards of a business career so dangerous to the character. Inevitably the asceticism which was the safeguard of the system disappeared. The disintegration was perhaps most evident in the United States, for in England what is unkindly called snobbishness was a check on more acquisitiveness. The mediaeval line, *Non est in mundo dives qui dicit abundo*, has never been true here. The American millionaire is often generous and sometimes retains very simple habits; but his wife, a walking advertisement of his success, spends enough for two. The methods of big business in all industrial countries are not at all always such as Calvin would have approved. The orgy of "consumptionism" is by no means confined to the rich. It was not the Rockefellers or the Fords who paid Dempsey 750,000 dollars for half an hour's "work" in the prize-ring, and it was not the payers of supertax who paid

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nearly three hundred million pounds for alcoholic liquors here in 1929.

The business man in the last century no doubt sincerely believed that he was helping to make England "a going concern." Very likely he was right. But self-denial for its own sake may be irrational. Clough in one of his poems urges the young man—

Go, say not in thine heart, and what then, were it accomplished,

Were the wild impulse allayed, what were the use and good?

The question which the Calvinists never put had to be answered, and it raised the whole subject of the standard of values. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number," was not a bad answer; but what is happiness, and how is it to be measured?

The age of expansion undoubtedly encouraged an acute secularising of Christianity, which spread downwards. I have quoted elsewhere a few sentences from Bertrand Russell, which express the main facts of the situation:

"Industrialism increases the productivity of labour, and this makes more luxuries possible. At first, in England, the chief luxury achieved was a larger population with an actual lowering of the standard of life. Then came a golden age when wages increased, hours of labour diminished, and simultaneously the middle class grew more prosperous. That was while Great Britain was still supreme. With the growth of foreign industrialism a new epoch began."

Before the Great Wars the differences between wealth and poverty were much greater than they

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are now, and “sweating,” particularly of female labour, was too common. Maurice and Kingsley protested against real evils, and the Christian Social Union in a later generation strove to awaken the public conscience to evils which as yet had not been rectified.

The operation of flogging a dead horse is always popular and is very congenial to rhetoricians. Dickens was careful to castigate abuses which were being reformed. There are now no longer any rich men, and there are not likely to be any. Whatever money can be wrung from the taxpayer will be spent on doles, pensions, *panem et circenses*. Unless I am greatly mistaken, we must expect a period of contracting economy, which means a reduction in the population or in the standard of living or both. There can be no greater disservice, at such a time, than to reiterate the fly-blown catchwords about grinding the faces of the poor.

There is of course no reason why a clergyman should not form his own opinion about politics, and try to persuade others that he is right. But it is a very different thing when the holders of high official positions presume to speak in the name of the Church on matters where high-minded and intelligent Churchmen notoriously differ.

I will conclude this discussion with three quotations. The first is from Aristotle:

“Legislation against private property may have a specious appearance of benevolence; men readily listen to it, and are

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easily induced to believe that in some wonderful manner everybody will become everybody's friend, especially when someone is heard denouncing the evils now existing in States, which are said to arise out of the possession of private property. These evils are due to a very different cause, the wickedness of human nature."

We seem to hear Carlyle denouncing "the gospel of Jean Jacques Rousseau."

The second is from Harnack:

"The Church has nothing to do with such practical questions of social economics as the nationalisation of private property and enterprise, land-tenure reforms, restriction of the legal hours of work, price-regulations, taxation and insurance; for in order to settle these matters such technical knowledge is required as is altogether outside the province of the Church, and if it were to meddle with them at all it would be led into a secularisation of the worst description. But it is its duty to interfere in public conditions whenever it finds that serious moral evils are being tolerated. Can it be right for the Church to shrug its shoulders, as it were, and pass prostitution by in silence, as the priest did the man who had fallen among thieves? Is it enough to collect money for penitentiaries? Does it keep silence when it sees a state of things destructive of the sanctity of marriage and of family life? Dare it look on calmly when the weak are trodden under foot? Dare it hear without rebuking it, language which in the name of Christianity destroys the peace of the land and sows scorn and hatred broadcast? When warm-hearted Christians take up economic questions, they tend to favour radical projects. They are wont to claim the support of the Gospel for a socialistic programme. Even Protestantism is not free from the danger that a second Arnold of Brescia may arise, and that clerical students of political economy may attempt to prescribe to others the attitude which, if they are to retain the name of Christians, they must assume towards social questions. There is a danger in this coquetting with the social-democratic movement. As

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long as the leaders of that movement inculcate a life devoid of religion, of duties, of sacrifice and of resignation, what can we have in common with their conception of life as a whole? It is again a more than questionable procedure to condemn the rich and whole classes of the nation, and dream that beginning at the bottom a new Christian commonwealth may be constructed."

My third quotation shall be from Burke:

"No sound ought to be heard in the Church but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of civil government and civil liberty gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are for the greater part ignorant both of the character they leave and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are fond of meddling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, in which they pronounce with so much confidence, they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite. Surely the Church is a place where a truce ought to be allowed to the discussions and animosities of mankind."

The business of the Church, and of ministers of religion, is to uphold by precept and example the standard of values which is plainly set forth in the New Testament. The Christian will try, in one way or another, to put into the common stock at least as much as he takes out. This being his duty, he will work honestly and conscientiously; he will not spend much on himself; he will be true and just in all his dealings; he will bear no malice or hatred in his heart; he will seek peace and ensue it. He will seek first the Kingdom of God, which St. Paul defines as righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He will believe, surely rightly, that if

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all men lived in this temper, there would be no social strife, no wars, civil or external, and that the necessaries of life would be available for all. This is an ideal not to be fully realised on earth; but it is the business of the Church to hold it up before the eyes of men. Such a Church will be neither rich nor politically powerful; but we should hear no more of the sickness of Christendom.

“A spiritual movement,” says Professor Cook, “while working upon current conditions, regenerates, organises and unifies, and in its very nature it permeates the diversities of life and thought and has practical and cultural results. Such an event would have effects as incalculable as other sweeping events in the past history of man.”<sup>1</sup>

The charges brought against the Churches from this side proceed partly from those whom Harnack calls warm-hearted Christians, but mainly from those whose outlook is purely secular. They say, like Jacob in the Book of Genesis, “If the Lord will keep me in the way that I go, and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then the Lord shall be my God.” They want to use the Churches for their own aims, which have nothing to do with religion. No sincere Christian could wish to promote the temporal interests of the Church through such an alliance.

But it may be said: Have not the very foundations of Christianity been undermined? Have not its solid walls been corroded by what have been called the acids of modernity? What is left of what used to be called revealed religion? There were disputes about

<sup>1</sup> *The Rebirth of Christianity*, p. 176.

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the seat of authority. Catholics depended upon the infallible Church, Protestants upon the infallible book. In the eighteenth century human reason was said to support faith. But it was generally agreed that the main truths of Christianity had been supernaturally revealed. Among the chief evidences were miracles and prophecy. The future state of rewards and punishments was guaranteed by Christ Himself.

Is there one of these external authorities that has not been discredited? The infallible Church is still accepted by those who think doubt a sin, by soldiers of the Church whose loyalty bids them not to reason why, not to make reply; "theirs but to do and die." But the historical record of the Great Church is not inspiring. As for the infallible book, the theory of verbal inspiration is really dead.

And how can facts about the creation of the world, and about the things that shall be hereafter, when "there shall be time no longer," be revealed? Did Christ ever reveal anything, except in parables? Is there anything left except mysticism, which appeals only to a few, and an ethical tradition which took root during the ages of faith?

St. Paul, in his sublime hymn to love, foresees that the external props of the faith will not last for ever.

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge—*gnosis*, theosophy—it shall vanish away. For we know in part and prophesy in part. . . . For now we see as in a mirror, by means of symbols."

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All is symbolic, except love, in which God gives us Himself. It has always been recognised that this chapter admits us into the very heart of the Gospel.

Man is an amphibious animal. He lives partly in a world of concrete facts, measurable and ponderable, and partly in a world of timeless values, which are not all connected with religion, for mathematics ignores time. We pass continually between the seen and the unseen, between appearance and reality, between time and eternity, put it how we will. And we need a bridge to take us across, at least most of us do. There are some who "mind earthly things," and do not want to cross. There have been contemplative mystics who have tried to live entirely on the other side. But the ordinary man needs a bridge. We wish to connect our two worlds, for we cannot be content to keep them separate. The world of eternal values cannot be adequately represented under the forms of time and space, which, as I have said elsewhere, are only the warp and woof of the canvas on which the mind depicts its impressions of the outside world. And therefore when we try to make the spiritual world real to ourselves, our natural and inevitable language is the language of poetry, symbol and myth. Recent philosophers have used the word "irrational," which I dislike. There is nothing irrational, quite the other way, in recognising the limits of human reason. We do not know why God created the universe. We cannot solve the contradictions which seem to inhere in space and

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time—puzzles, I venture to think, which have not been solved by putting a hyphen between them. I do not think the problem of evil has ever been solved. It is important to realise that these difficulties beset philosophy as much as religion. We want to make the spiritual world real to us. Shall we use spatial symbols? Heaven is not here, but somewhere else. Or temporal? Eternity is an endless series of moments. Or optical? It is reality, not appearance. Goethe says, “all that is transitory is only a symbol,” which does not go beyond St. Paul’s words, “the things that are seen are temporary [rather than ‘temporal’]; the things that are not seen are eternal.”

What should be our attitude towards the “fact-like stories,” as von Hügel calls them, which are parts of dogmatic theology? They have a spiritual meaning, but is the connection with historical fact essential? We believe that all earthly life is sacramental; the Incarnation was not merely a kind of vision, as the Docetists believed. The Russian theologian, Berdyaeff, says boldly:

“Christianity is entirely mythological, as indeed all religion is, and Christian myths represent the deepest and most central realities of the spiritual world. . . . It is high time to cease being ashamed of Christian mythology.”

This is liable to be misunderstood, because we often use “myth” as a synonym for fiction. But Plato’s myths, for example, are meant to be taken seriously. Something like this, he would say, is true. I was

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very much struck when I found in F. H. Bradley's *Essays on Truth and Reality*<sup>1</sup> a confession which means a great deal as coming from that ruthlessly sincere thinker: "I find myself now taking more and more as literal fact what I used in my youth to admire and love as poetry."

Nevertheless, we must not make too much of this admission. In the first place, what is called supernaturalistic dualism, the theory of occasional divine interventions, miraculous suspensions of natural law, is the one theory with which modern scientists can make no terms. It would make havoc of their first postulate, the uniformity of nature. If Home the medium really flew out of the window, which several intelligent persons thought they saw him do, the law of gravitation is unreliable. Besides this, the sacramental character of a historical dogma is destroyed if it is hardened into a mere isolated occurrence. Religious symbols always tend to evaporate or to petrify, and either process is fatal to them. In former days, when men demanded that God should "do something," these dogmas were valued precisely because they were unique; now if they are valued, it is because they were not unique, but symbols or revelations of truths which vitally concern you and me.

There is no religious belief which seems to have decayed more rapidly than the traditional doctrines about the future life. This is true, in spite of the

<sup>1</sup> F. H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, Oxford University Press.

pathetic recourse to necromancy among many whom the two wars have bereaved of their dearest. Even in sermons the next world is not often referred to, and in Anglican pulpits the old crude promises and grisly threats are happily heard no longer. It is curious to observe how human hopes for the future sometimes fly away to heaven and sometimes come back to earth. The present generation has not recovered faith in God, and has lost faith in man. This is why we are so unhappy.

What is the source of the Christian belief in human immortality? In the earlier books of the Old Testament there is no belief in a future life. There was Sheol, and what was Sheol? A shadowy world, not within the jurisdiction of Yahveh. It was very much like the Hades of Homer, but even more unsubstantial. "Sing, O goddess, the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus, which sent many souls of heroes to Hades, but the heroes themselves he gave to be the prey of dogs and vultures." In the later Hebrew books we find the belief in some kind of resurrection taking shape—for the remnant of the nation, and even for individuals. This belief did not take its rise in necromancy, but in answer to the question which pervades the whole of the Old Testament, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" In our Lord's time most of the Jews believed in a place of torment, Gehenna; in an intermediate place, Hades; and in an abode of bliss and compensation for earthly suffering, Abraham's bosom or Paradise.

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Our Lord used these pictures in parables; He did not criticise them; but if He accepted the limitations of human knowledge, must we not believe that He knew no more about the future than we do? When He was confronted with the Sadducees, who refused to accept the recent additions to Hebrew religion, His only argument was, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him." It is the argument which Augustine sums up so beautifully, *Quod Deo non perit sibi non perit*—that which does not perish for God does not perish for itself. Nothing that really *is* can ever perish, as Plotinus says. "There is no possibility for real Being to pass out of existence," says Thomas Aquinas.

For the Christian, belief in God is central, belief in human immortality is consequential. This is a fundamental truth, which rules out all miserable arguments from ghosts, apparitions, and the chatter of mediums. But this throws back our belief in immortality to a more fundamental question still, What is the ground of our belief in God? The Catholics say that God has not revealed Himself, as He is, in such a way that no one can doubt His existence without absurdity. This they call the error of "ontologism." They say that belief in God is "a valid inference." I could not pray to a valid inference, but I think I know what they mean. God has revealed Himself, but not as the ineffable Godhead, Who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, but under three of His attributes, as

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perfect Goodness or Love, Truth and Beauty. Philosophers speak of these as the eternal or absolute values. We must not think of values, which, as Platonists would say, constitute the real world, as unrelated to facts. A value-judgment which is not also a judgment of existence is in the air; it is the baseless fabric of a vision. That which has no existence has no value, and that which has no value has no existence, for we cannot think of existence without valuation. The ultimate identity of value and existence is the venture of faith to which mysticism and Platonic idealism are committed. "All claims on man's behalf," says Pringle Pattison, "must be based on the objectivity of the values revealed in his experience, and brokenly realised there. . . . Man does not make values any more than he makes reality." To deny any thought which is more than relative is to deprive even scepticism of the grounds upon which it rests. The logical sceptic has no mind to doubt with. In the words of Münsterberg, "every doubt of absolute values destroys itself. As thought it contradicts itself; as doubt it denies itself; as belief it despairs of itself." It is in this world of absolute values that we find our immortality.

If we found our faith in ultimate reality on our confidence that God has revealed Himself in these absolute ideas or values, we must consider rather more carefully what they mean. The goal of Goodness is the actualisation of the ought-to-be. The goal

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of Truth is unity, which in the outer world means harmony, the removal of contradictions; in the inner world, peace or happiness. Beauty is the self-recognition of creative Spirit in its own works; it gives us neither information nor advice; but it satisfies a part of our nature which demands our homage. It would be possible to hold that in Love, giving the word its full meaning as the vision of God who is love, the three absolute values, which must not be resolved into each other, form a "three-fold cord, not quickly broken."

These values are supra-temporal, eternal, and indestructible. They are above time, which is always hurling its own products into nothingness. We are what we care for, what we love; and so far as we have our continuing city in the spiritual world, we are sure of our immortality. We feel and know that we are eternal, as Spinoza says.

But of course we have other and still more intimate grounds for believing in God. I mean our communion with Him in prayer. If our own experience has been dim and fitful, we should ask ourselves whether we have earned anything more. The saints have had no doubt whatever.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

But it may be objected that eternal life thus conceived gives us no guarantee of personal survival. Keyserling says that mysticism always ends in

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impersonal immortality. Impersonal is a negative word; it would be better to say that the spiritual world is superpersonal. All finite purposes, including our own lives, have a beginning, middle, and end. When their purposes are achieved, they take their place in the eternal order. When a good man's work in this world is done, will he not say, while admitting his many failures, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace?" We may leave it to our misguided necromancers to describe the adventures of the disembodied ghost, hovering uneasily over its former home.

*"Quo cursu deserta petiverit, et quibus ante  
Infelix sua tecta supervolitaverit alis."*

Speaking for myself, now that I have come nearly to the end of my earthly probation, I am quite content to leave it so and to ask no more questions.

There is however one important problem, to which Christianity gives us no answer. Many lives, especially those which are cut short by an early death, are obviously incomplete. When Tennyson says, "Give her [the soul] the wages of going on and not to die," is not this a reasonable demand? Is there, or is there not, a future probation? Can we possibly think that one brief life in this world determines the fate of a soul in eternity? Are we not almost all "over bad for blessing and over good for banning"? When a good and able man leaves his life's work half done, has God no further use for

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him? It is this thought, which surely deserves respect, which has given rise to the very widely held belief in reincarnation, which has been accepted not only in the Asiatic religions but by Christians like Origen, and by Robert Browning in *Rabbi ben Ezra*. The demand for divine justice has found expression in the Indian doctrine of Karma, in which, though there is no memory of former states of existence, the bare form of personality survives, and its liabilities. Within Christianity there is the belief in purgatory, which of course is not a "second paper" for borderline cases, but a period of purification for those who will ultimately be saved but are as yet unfit for heaven. Protestants formally reject the doctrine of purgatory, but in practice they have changed hell into purgatory by believing that punishment will be reformatory, not vindictive and not eternal. It is difficult to imagine how, when "there shall be time no longer," there can be any further change or progress. I think the Catholic doctrine is that purgatory is "in time"; and theologians have intercalated an intermediate condition, which they have called *aevum*, between time and eternity. I do not think we can answer these questions; I can only say that any doctrine which is plainly inconsistent with the belief that God is both just and merciful ought not to find a place in our religion.

As for the preservation of our personality, it is a philosophical question which I can hardly discuss in this chapter. The belief of Christian mystics, of

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whom St. Paul is the first and greatest, is that personality is not given to us to start with, and that, in order to win salvation, soul (*psyche*) must become spirit (*pneuma*), spirit being the hidden man of the heart, the Christ in us, which may be but is not yet ourselves. This is the immortal part of us. When our Lord says that we must lose our *psyche* in order to keep it unto life eternal, He certainly does not mean only the acceptance of bodily death, as martyrs do, though the ready self-sacrifice of the brave soldier in war shows that even the non-religious man values some things more than his life. There are some things that all of us would die rather than do. This means that in our heart of hearts we know that there may be circumstances in which, as the Oxford philosopher Nettleship, who faced death bravely in the Alps, said, "Death does not count." This does not mean that we shall be "absorbed in the Absolute." In the eternal world separateness may be transcended but not distinctness. Beatified spirits may be transparent to each other, but they will remain themselves.

The subject of this chapter is the sickness of Christendom, and the question may be raised whether the undoubted weakening of the belief in future retribution has had much effect on conduct. The answer is that it makes no difference to the very good, who are glad to serve God for Himself alone, nor to the very bad, who never believed it. It has undoubtedly deprived some Churches of a

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lucrative source of revenue, but this need not be regretted. There is a story of an old Presbyterian who after a not very virtuous life asked his minister whether if he gave a large sum of money to the Kirk, the minister could guarantee that it would be well with him hereafter. The cautious Scot replied, "I cannot precisely guarantee it, but it is an experiment well worth trying." The Kirk did not get the money; some other Churches might have been more positive. I do not think that a cool head and a cold heart ever brought a man to the foot of the Cross; but we cannot forget that our Lord did use this inducement in rather uncompromising terms. We are bidden to fear Him who has power to cast into hell. Whatever we mean by hell, it is only perfect love that can cast out fear, and our love is far from perfect.

To sum up, it is very difficult to say whether Christianity, as distinct from institutionalism, is really losing ground. It may be that in the future religious experience, as opposed to external authority, will be the "impregnable rock" of faith. If this is so, Christianity will become more individual and more universal. There will be an end of the insolent arrogance of exclusive ecclesiasticism. The different denominations will probably remain independent of each other, but they will recognise each other and work together. There will even be friendly intercourse with the religions of Asia. It has lately been said that both Christianity and Buddhism have lost by their alienation from each other,

and I think this is true. That the “inner light” or “testimony of the Holy Spirit” is able to carry the weight which formerly devolved on the infallible Church and the infallible book I have no doubt. My doubt is whether the peoples of Europe will accept a spiritual religion, or whether they will go back to “the weak and beggarly elements” of superstition, and the deceptive lure of totalitarian politics. I know what I hope for, but it may very well be that one of St. Bernard’s “dark nights” may overtake the religion as well as the secular condition of Europe. I am tempted to end with a quotation from that Liberal Catholic Döllinger, written in happier times:

“There must be a process of purification on both sides, and knowledge must pioneer the way. Thus the domain of science appears like the truce of God in the Middle Ages, or like a consecrated place where those elsewhere religiously divided have come together and carry on their enquiries and their work in harmony. From this brotherhood of knowledge will one day proceed a higher unity and conciliation embracing the whole domain of historical and then of religious truth, when under the influence of a milder atmosphere the crust of polemical and sectarian ice thaws and melts away, as the patriot and the Christian hopes and prays.”

The present atmosphere is not mild; but Christendom has never been divided in the chambers where good men and women pray. The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is far more important than church-going, a test which is naturally over-valued by the clerical profession.



### III

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IT is sometimes said, and the opinion has been energetically defended by the governments which were mainly responsible for dragging the world into two suicidal conflicts, that war is a biological necessity, part of the struggle for life which results in the survival of the fittest. Darwin never suggested that the adaptation to environment which he found in animal life had any analogy to human warfare. It happens sometimes that the increase of one species makes life impossible for another, but the weaker species is not destroyed by violence. The grey squirrel from the New World is ousting our indigenous red squirrel; the black rat is now uncommon in England, since the arrival of the brown "Norway" rat. But there is no evidence that the brown rat ever attacks the black. Animals, of course, feed on animals of another species, and sometimes establish what is called a symbiosis, but there is nothing remotely resembling human warfare.

There is, however, a very significant exception. The social insects have established an elaborate and stable civilisation, and they do indulge in war as well as slavery and, we are told, the keeping of pets. If a lump of unclaimed honey is left between two beehives, the two hives will fight for it till the

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ground is covered with corpses. Organised raids are not unknown. The biological argument in favour of war, though it is quite misleading if applied to present conditions, has just this amount of justification.

History recalls only a few thousand years out of the half million or more in which *Homo sapiens* or his immediate progenitors have existed on the earth. It is doubtful whether we can speak of war as an institution before the Bronze Age. Man the hunter hardly knew any enemies except the wild beasts, and he is poorly provided by Nature for offensive action. Pastoral man seldom needs weapons, and bands of shepherds prefer to range apart. Things were different when the clan became a tribe or nation occupying cultivated land. Organised defence became necessary, especially against predatory nomads, whose ruinous influence upon civilisation has never been better described than by Peisker in the *Cambridge Mediaeval History*. The Wolf State, as I have called it in another chapter of this book, is represented in antiquity by Assyria, and later by the destructive inroads of Huns, Mongols and Turks, which almost extinguished civilisation in its earliest seats.

The origins of these mass migrations are imperfectly known; but it seems probable that climatic changes were one determining cause. After the last ice age melting glaciers in central Asia formed large rivers which finally dried up, and the invaders set

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in motion other tribes, as the Goths were compelled by the Huns to seek fresh fields and new pastures. Human nature being what it is, arms which were taken up at first for defence and security were after a time used for aggression and conquest. There is no clear line between security and domination. The balance of power is continually disturbed.

It will not be worth while, for the purposes of this chapter, to give more space to the history of war except as bearing on the present and future of humanity. But one or two remarks may be made. The Assyrian power rose, declined, rose again, and finally collapsed. During the earlier period of conquest the army consisted of peasants, called from the tillage of their farms for brief seasonal raids. When the objectives became too far from the homeland this method could no longer be employed, and there was a temporary decline, followed by the organisation of a standing professional army. This for a time made Assyria more formidable than ever, but it ended in the total destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. Something like this happened to Rome, where the victory over Carthage was followed by humiliating defeats in distant campaigns, and by acute danger from an inroad of northern barbarians. Marius introduced a standing army, and for a time Roman arms were irresistible. But civil war followed almost at once; and though the Empire of Augustus and his successors gave the Mediterranean lands two hundred years of relative peace and prosperity

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such as they have never enjoyed since, at the end of that time there were very few Romans left. All the old families except the obscure Anicci were extinct; the emperors were Spaniards, Illyrians, Africans, Syrians, and Philip the Arab. It was a striking example of the maxim that nothing fails like success. Ruling nations, like ruling classes, rule themselves out.

Intensive cultivation promotes peaceable and unprogressive habits. The *fellahin* of Egypt, the Hindus and Chinese have lived for thousands of years with very few changes. Alien rulers have not altered their habits; the bulk of the population has lived in extreme poverty. On the other hand when a nation is expanding, it may resort either to colonisation or to exploitation. The early Greek colonies were established without much resistance from the natives of the places where they were planted. It was a brilliant period of real growth among a hardy and prolific race.

Arnold Toynbee thinks that territorial expansion without colonisation—in other words, the subjugation and exploitation of alien populations—is a sign that a civilisation is beginning to disintegrate. It would perhaps be truer to say that disintegration is the Nemesis of exploitation. The Romans themselves were aware of their danger. What will become of Rome, Cato asked, when she no longer has any enemy to fear? It is a question which every nation will have to ask if ever universal peace is established, for the fear of external rivals has been a potent force

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against revolution. But for Rome the fatal step was the substitution of spoliation for the peaceful development of native resources. The tragedy is that Rome was less guilty than most conquerors. Italy was Romanised by a generous policy, and the fact that France and Spain still speak Latin languages is a great tribute to the genius of Rome for imposing her civilisation on tribes of vigorous barbarians. No more beautiful tributes to a ruling Power have ever been paid than the loyal devotion of Claudian and Rutilius to the queen of cities when she was already almost moribund. But shameless usury and extortion by provincial governors, and slave labour, not only ruined the Italian yeoman, but filled the imperial city with a mob of worthless immigrants from all parts of the Empire, and these were bribed to keep quiet by a system of doles and free amusements which modern governments are beginning to copy. Rome became an octopus, producing nothing and consuming the wealth of the world. To live on tribute is a short road to ruin. The dishonesty of the Roman mint, which ruined the middle class, was made necessary by the impossibility of paying for the defence of the frontiers. The towns shrank into mere forts; the chaos of the third century only hastened an inevitable doom. If we had gone on pillaging India as we did in the time of Clive, and reaping golden harvests from slave-plantations in the West Indies, our social life and politics would have been corrupted in the same way.

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We must therefore judge differently wars of conquest and wars of colonisation. We cannot seriously think that we ought to have left North America to the Redskins and Australia to the Blackfellows. Arnold Toynbee passes a severe judgment on our American settlers for “exterminating” the Red Indians, and contrasts with British America the condition of Mexico, where the population is still mainly Indian or *mestizo*. This, however, is unfair. Hunting tribes cannot exist in a settled country; in Mexico and Peru there were large cities and the rudiments of civilisation. In the larger Antilles the natives were really exterminated by the Spaniards. There are probably as many Indians in Canada and the United States as there were when Europeans first entered the country. The Tasmanians, savages of a very low type, were no doubt exterminated.

War is a manifest evil, and from the beginning of history there have been protests against it and hopes that it may be abolished. In India the Vedas are warlike, and in the *Bhagavadgita* Krishna removed the scruples of Arjuna about slaughtering his kinsfolk. But both in Hinduism and Buddhism there has been a strong feeling that war is impious. “If you would honour Buddha,” said a Brahman who was mediating between two belligerents, “follow the example of his patience and long-suffering. Conquer your foe by force, and you increase his enmity; conquer by love, and you will reap no after-sorrow.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hastings, *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XII, p. 677.

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I have spoken elsewhere of the deplorable misuse of the earlier books of the Old Testament to justify atrocious cruelty in war. The danger was already felt when Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths in the fourth century, refused to translate the Books of Kings, on the ground that his converts needed to have their violent habits checked rather than encouraged. The Anglican missionaries to the Maoris found the same difficulty. Sometimes Christian teachers have wished to find justification in the Scriptures for their most unchristian tempers; at other times they have assumed that every command attributed to Yahveh must be morally right. There is an egregious example of this in one of Newman's sermons, about the massacres of the Canaanites. If we were content to treat the Hebrew scriptures as a record of the gradual enlightenment of a fierce tribe of nomads, who like other nations were inspired to accept a much higher type of religion about the middle of the first millennium before Christ, their teachers being the later school of prophets, we should be saved both from the necessity of making disingenuous excuses and from the temptation of finding a religious sanction for actions which are a disgrace to humanity. The later prophets have a holy hatred of war as well as of social injustice. If some of them seem to deprecate even resistance to aggression, this may have been a sound political judgment as to the futility of war against manifestly superior force. Jeremiah would no doubt

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have been executed or imprisoned by any modern belligerent government. The old uncompromising nationalism revived under the Maccabees, and at last, as Christ foresaw, led to the political extinction of the Jewish nation. Now that armed resistance has been denied them, the Jews have stood by the graves of all their oppressors in turn.

There can be no doubt whatever that our Lord condemns war and violence absolutely. Even German scholars like Harnack admit this. But there are certain considerations which must be taken into account. He lived at a time when there was a widespread hope that the turmoils which had devastated Europe in the preceding century had been ended by the establishment of peace under Augustus. The Fourth Eclogue of Virgil is a well-known example of these optimistic dreams. Jerusalem was one of several half-independent priest-States tolerated by the Roman government; it enlisted no soldiers. Besides this, it has often been pointed out that Christ was not and did not claim to be a legislator. He told His disciples what ought to be, not what could be under present conditions, and like other preachers He sometimes used hyperbolical language which should not have been misunderstood. Accordingly, there has always been a controversy as to how far the Sermon on the Mount can be taken as a guide in practical politics. Several recent writers, who in my opinion have greatly exaggerated the importance of what they call the eschatological

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element in Christ's teaching—the expectation that the existing order of society would not be of long continuance—have suggested that this erroneous belief affected our Lord's teaching about war, as about other matters. I have said in an earlier chapter that His ethical injunctions about the law of love are not in any way connected with beliefs about the approaching end of the world. The appeal is to the abiding will of God.

The teaching of the Church about war has been so often collected that a very brief summary here should suffice. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen and Lactantius are all insistent that war is an evil institution with which the Church can have nothing to do. It was the consistent policy of the early Christians to offer no resistance to persecution; even their enemies could not accuse them of being rebels, though Celsus and others blame them for being conscientious objectors at a time when their country was in danger. Origen in a remarkable passage says: "How would it have been possible for the peaceful teaching which does not allow its followers even to defend themselves against their enemies to prevail, unless at the coming of Jesus the affairs of the world had everywhere changed into a more peaceful state?" It would seem to follow that under less favourable conditions the prohibition might have been less absolute. There were a few Christians in the army, but Marinus of Caesarea in 260 was executed for not sacrificing,

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Maximilian, a Numidian, in 295 suffered death as a conscientious objector, and Marcellus in Morocco in 298 had the same fate.

War, says Westermarck, is a rock on which Christian principles have suffered the most miserable shipwreck. I cannot dispute the justice of this remark; but if our object is to understand, and not to praise or blame, we must consider the immense difficulties which the Church had to face. With the conversion of Constantine Christianity became the religion of the State, and a State religion can hardly be neutral in national policy. Even Athanasius, though a strong pacifist, says that it is lawful to kill enemies in war. The Council of Arles in 353 condemned soldiers who desert in peace time on religious grounds. Ambrose uses the unhappy argument from the Old Testament.

Augustine, though in a famous passage he declares that imperialism is mere brigandage, is convinced that, in our sinful state, occasions may arise which make war necessary. As North Africa was being ravaged by the Vandals, he could hardly come to any other conclusion. His authority was on the whole accepted by the Catholic Church. Thomas Aquinas is in substantial agreement with Augustine, but his arguments are rather sophistical.

Bishops and priests were forbidden to shed blood. But in the Dark Ages, as they often wished to fight, they went into battle with heavy clubs, with which they could reduce their enemies to a pulp without

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breaking the skin. The same conscientious scruple enjoined that heretics should be burned alive.

Much more important in the attitude of the Church to war was the encouragement given to the Crusades. This has been represented by Lecky as a victory of the spirit of Islam over that of Christianity; but the Old Testament gave quite as much sanction to wars of religion as the Koran.

The acceptance by the Church of that strange bastard, chivalry, is a curious chapter in history. The religious Orders of Knighthood, pledged to celibacy—one can hardly say to chastity—were founded in the twelfth century, in connection with the Crusades. They encouraged the soldierly virtues and sometimes tried to check atrocities in war. There was a romantic cult of young and beautiful women, who of course could not be the wives of the monkish knights. Chivalry was an ideal wider than the Orders of Knights. Its relation to feudalism, to heraldry, to private war, to the tournament and the duel, cannot be traced here. Even in its decadence it inspired respect; in Spain Don Quixote was not merely a figure of fun. Tennyson's picture of King Arthur's Knights as Victorian gentlemen is often laughed at; but his *Idylls* show that the "happy warrior" was still honoured in the last century. Wordsworth's poem describes the ideal knight; many found in Charles Gordon a worthy example of that ideal.

The "truce of God" in the Middle Ages is often

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referred to as a proof that the Church tried to mitigate the horrors of war. The intention was good, but the rule was seldom observed, and in fact hardly could be in wartime.

Protests against war were made by various mystical and so-called heretical sects—the Cathari, the Paterines in Italy, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, many Franciscans, the Lollards, the Moravians, the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Doukhobors in Russia and the Bahais in Persia. The Christian sectarian pacifists claimed to be returning to the original Gospel. Where they differed from the Great Church was mainly in refusing to admit a “relative Law of Nature,” to be accepted as suited to man’s fallen state. The Lutherans and Calvinists could not renounce war; Zwingli was himself killed in battle. Our admiration for the testimony of the Society of Friends must not make us suppress the fact that their founder George Fox wrote a letter to Cromwell which would have satisfied his chauvinistic court poet, Andrew Marvell.

Among notable champions of peace we may mention Dean Colet of St. Paul’s, who declared in his pulpit that the worst peace was better than the best war, and was rather surprisingly forgiven by Henry VIII, who was preparing an attack upon France; Erasmus, whose eloquent protest deserves to live; many Quakers, such as Woolman in America; the Abbé de St. Pierre; Voltaire, who called war an infernal enterprise in which “every chief ruffian has

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his colours consecrated, and prays to God before he goes to destroy his neighbour"; among Germans, Kant; in Russia, Tolstoi. Among living men we have already mentioned Aldous Huxley.

What are the causes of war? We may classify them as psychological, political, and economic. There are racial habits, which though they were not formed in the infancy of the human race, and are not ineradicable, are of very long standing, and since they no longer correspond with the interests of civilised nations, are very dangerous. We are fond of playing at occupations which for our ancestors were the serious business of life. Hunting, fishing, and shooting are still the chosen amusements of the leisured class. The savage dances furiously to placate his gods or to excite his passions; we shuffle slowly about a room to the sound of barbaric music. The savage regards war as a semi-religious ritual; he sometimes prepares for it by ascetic exercises, and always puts on his best finery. Modern armies sometimes sing hymns before going into action, and till lately they were dressed in attractive uniforms, with much attention to pipe-clay. Instead of single combats and tournaments, we now have competitive games, with teams of professionals. These are frankly sham battles. It never occurs to footballers how many more goals they could score if the two teams would co-operate.

But we sometimes crave for the real thing, hot and strong. It is quite as irrational as the harmless

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substitutes which we have found for it; for apart from the horrible misery which it causes, the armies have no real reason to hate each other, and the prizes of victory are illusory. Modern war means ruin and bankruptcy for both sides, and if territory is annexed, unwilling subjects are a weakness, not a strength. The old saying, *vae victis*, is as true as ever. But *vae victoribus* is equally true. The conquered start again from scratch, unencumbered; the victors are loaded with self-imposed burdens and live in fear of *la revanche*. France and Germany have belaboured each other like a pair of flagellant monks, and each time the flogged has had his revenge on the flogger.

Dr. William Brown of Oxford has published a detailed study of the psychology of war.<sup>1</sup> He is a disciple of Freud, and there are parts of the book which do not appeal to me; but he is an acknowledged authority, and his work among soldiers during the First Great War enables him to speak with experience of the psychology of the fighting man. He considers that the most fundamental of the forces which make war possible are the instincts of self-preservation and of pugnacity. The instinct of pugnacity is not strong among adults in time of peace; he would say that it is "repressed," but it is easily stirred into activity. Psychologists say that pugnacity is strongest between the ages of eight and twelve. Its persistence therefore may be a form of puerilism. In wartime the belligerents "wallow in

<sup>1</sup> *War and Peace*, A. and C. Black, 1939.

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emotion"; they lose mental control and are in an abnormal state. The public appeal is always to justice and national danger. This is a sign of moralisation in the peoples, though not in their rulers; Sennacherib did not think it necessary to tell the Assyrians that Hezekiah was plotting to destroy Nineveh. But even in many decent and rational people there is a pleasure in giving vent to the instinct of pugnacity, though they know that war is "an infinitely stupid business."

Hatred and the feeling of solidarity pay a high psychological dividend. The statistics of suicide show that, for non-combatants at least, life is more interesting in war than in peace. We must not underestimate the effect of mere boredom as a cause of war and revolution. France was tired of Louis Philippe, though his reign had been very prosperous. His subjects got rid of him and installed Napoleon the Little, who gave them Solferino, Mexico, and Sedan.

There is nothing more terrible than ignorance in action, as Goethe said. A whole nation may exhibit signs of paranoia, imagining itself encircled by enemies. The warmongers must proclaim an ideal aim, the white man's burden, or "Blood and Soil," and discover a demon, the Jews or the Bolsheviks or the capitalists. In former times Paynims or heretics were good enough to justify furious hatred. Much harm is done by false propaganda, by lying, to use a plain word. Collective psychosis may break out

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very suddenly. Before the murder at Sarajevo nobody in England was thinking of war; they were thinking of Ireland, of the suffragettes, of their summer holiday. But within a few days the most ferocious hatred was levelled against the luckless Kaiser, who, as I know from private letters written to an English friend in the spring of 1914, complained bitterly that the Army chiefs were taking everything out of his hands, that his eldest son was intriguing against him, and that "we are drifting either to war or revolution." At the beginning of the second war he wrote to me with "peace on earth," and was graciously pleased when I told him that if he had been in control I believed that the war would not have broken out. But we must always have a demon, to be adorned with horns and a tail—Napoleon, Nicholas I, Wilhelm II, or Hitler.

Besides pugnacity, fear is a potent cause of war, and unfortunately fear is often well founded. As Theodore Roosevelt said:

"It is idle to make speeches and write essays against this fear, because at present the fear has a real basis. Each nation has cause for the fear it feels. Each nation has cause to believe that its national life is in peril unless it is able to take the national life of one or more of its foes, or at least to cripple that foe. The causes of fear must be removed."

I shall never forget a talk which I had with the eminent German publicist, Hans Delbrück, at Berlin in 1911. I regretted the ill-feeling between the two countries. "That does not matter much," he

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replied; "but where there is fear there is danger." He was right; it was fear and not sympathy with Belgium or Serbia, which drove us into war in 1914. Half the Cabinet were for neutrality, but Asquith said: "If we do not help the French, we shall be without a friend in the world." The argument was unanswerable. It is indeed useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism while the wolf remains of a different opinion. This, however, belongs rather to the political than to the psychological causes of war.

Dr. Brown, at the end of his book, reminds us of the almost hysterical gratitude which was felt for Neville Chamberlain after Munich, not only here, but in other countries and in Germany itself, as he told me; and how after a brief interval there was a revulsion of feeling against him, though it was well known by those behind the scenes in politics that we were unprepared for war, and that we should not have been helped by France or America or our own Dominions.<sup>1</sup> The reaction was of an emotional, almost of a neurotic nature. "When each nation struggles for security by increasing its armaments and so diminishing the security of other nations, the most vicious of all circles revolves."

We may pass now to the political causes of war, a subject on which I have encroached in speaking

<sup>1</sup> Some good authorities think that if we had threatened Germany with war in 1938, Hitler would not have called our bluff, or if he had done so would have been deposed. They may be right, but I think the Germans were too well informed.

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of fear. Almost all our wars have been entered upon with the object of preserving or restoring the balance of power in Europe, which was threatened by the ambition of some Continental nation. We have formed and subsidised coalitions with this purpose. Again and again it has been Britain which has prevented the domination of the Continent by one Power. We have foiled Spain once, France twice, Germany twice. Having achieved our purpose, we now descry another danger looming on the horizon. Some of us are beginning to think that we have been unwise; but in 1939 the German peril was the most menacing.

War used to be the sport of kings. Next to the judicious choice of a bedfellow, which was said to be the method favoured by Austria,<sup>1</sup> the “glory” of being a *Mehrer des Reichs* was the ambition of every vigorous monarch. Besides this, war was for a time really profitable. Booty, the ransom of prisoners, and the piracy which Queen Elizabeth encouraged, at any rate enriched some people. There was also the mistaken idea that the wealth of another country might be captured by destroying its commerce, and that the accumulation of bullion made a country rich. Napoleon hoped to ruin England by stopping our exports. To-day the exclusive access to raw materials, or to products necessary for munitions is, as I shall presently show, an object with statesmen.

<sup>1</sup> “*Bella gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube.*”

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Racialism is a superstitious variety of nationalism. A nation is a society united by a delusion about its ancestry and by a common hatred of its neighbours. The Nordic theory, advocated by the Frenchman Gobineau, by the Englishman Houston Chamberlain, by one or two Americans and by many Germans, is scientifically indefensible. We are all mongrels, and the better for being so. But German racialism is only the latest form of collective arrogance and egotism. Its earlier forms have been the opposition of Greek and barbarian, of Jew and Gentile, of Christian and infidel, of Catholic and Protestant, of Chinamen and foreign devils. In Christ, as St. Paul says, there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. In Christ there is neither Englishman nor German, Catholic nor Protestant, Churchman nor Dissenter.

What the French call *étatisme* is an attempt to attach to the idea of the State the loyalty which it is natural to feel towards our country. I have no sympathy with those who deride patriotism. Grant Allen called it a vulgar vice, the national or collective form of the monopolist instinct. Even Ruskin called it "an absurd prejudice founded on an extended selfishness." Herbert Spencer called it "reflex egoism"; Havelock Ellis "a virtue among barbarians." We have no right to condemn a sentiment because it may become perverted. There is no limit to what our country may come to mean for us without ceasing to be our country. It begins with

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the love of family, of clan, and of home; but it may expand till, in the words of Hosea Biglow, it is “that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty and the like.” This marks the circumference of our loyalty; its centre will remain among the scenes of our early home, whether it be the English countryside, with its gentle lines of hill and dale, its orchards and village greens, or Caledonia stern and wild. We love our country, and it is worthy of our love. There is nothing cruel or sinister or unjust here. State-worship is a totally different thing; it is the homage to a foul and grotesque idol.

It is sometimes said—we often hear it now, though it is hard to believe that it is said sincerely—that “the advocacy of peace occurs under Democracy and not elsewhere.” This was not the opinion of Mirabeau, who said: “Free peoples are more eager for war, and Democracies more the slaves of their passions, than the most absolute autocracies.” “Moderation,” said Lord Salisbury, “especially in matters of territory, has never been a characteristic of Democracy. Whenever it has had free play, in the ancient world or in the modern, a thirst for empire, a readiness for aggressive war, has always marked it.” “A Democracy,” says an American, Irving Babbitt, “is likely to be idealistic in its feelings about itself, but imperialistic in its practice. We Americans have shown ourselves a consistently imperialistic people.” Conscription is a

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terrible weapon put into the hands of governments by Democracy. Despotic governments seldom dare to resort to it. Let us have done with this humbug. We shall not establish peace by changing the form of government of our neighbours.

The owners of property, who have nothing to gain and everything to lose by war, are either pacifists or romantic patriots. It is ridiculous to suppose that they want war, even if they happen to have shares in armament factories. This is one of the absurd charges brought by Left-wing writers, who advocate the nationalisation of munition works. This would not promote peace, but would put another weapon into the hands of the tyrannical State.

Autocratic governments are often driven to rely on the army. "Satisfy the soldiers," said Septimius Severus; "the rest do not matter." Germany, both under Wilhelm II and under Hitler, was increasingly dominated by the military caste, whose training and professional ambition made them favour war. It has sometimes happened that a government has entered upon a war of conquest in order to forestall a popular rising. The wars of Napoleon III were undertaken partly from this motive, which no doubt influenced the Tsarist Government in its last disastrous enterprise. It is a rather desperate expedient, for a nation on the brink of revolution is apt to be defeated, and after defeat is certain to revenge itself upon its rulers. Horace says that

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the rulers go mad and the people suffer: *delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*. The converse is sometimes true.

But the main political cause of war is one which can hardly be avowed. Shakespeare's words, "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done," are terribly true. The Roman poet Lucan states in his terse Latin a maxim of worldly wisdom: "It is always a mistake to delay when you are ready." *Semper nocuit differre paratis*. Most wars are preventive in the minds of those who make them. Rauschning's *Makers of Destruction* (Eyre and Spottiswoode) shows how many intelligent Germans believed that it was now or never for Germany. In another twenty years Russia would be too strong to be attacked or resisted. Preparations for war make war almost inevitable.

We now turn to the economic causes of war. It is convenient to make this classification, though of course political and economic interests overlap. There is a tendency now to overstress economic motives both in social life and in international affairs, but they are certainly important. Lord Stamp<sup>1</sup> enumerates three conditions: economic penetration, economic inequality, and differential population. A developed country devotes its brains and capital to the improvement of conditions in a more backward country, which it supplies with railways and factories, to the advantage of both. But

<sup>1</sup> *The Causes of War* (Allen and Unwin), pp. 83-95.

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after a time the backward country resents the payment of interest on its loans. It may penalise its immigrants, as the Boers did the *uitlanders* in the Transvaal, or the immigrants may make themselves a privileged class. Prestige rather than profit may cause the creditor country to make war.

Inequalities of natural products, Lord Stamp shows, are changing their character. It is the rare minerals which are now most important for war:

“Ninety per cent. of asbestos comes from the British Empire, 63 per cent. of chromite, and 90 per cent. of nickel from Canada. Ninety-four per cent. of potash comes from Germany and France, 70 per cent. of petroleum from the United States, 78 per cent. of antimony from China and Bolivia, 50 per cent. of copper from the United States.”

The world depends on the British Empire for nickel, which is of dangerous importance in war. But it is only the fear of war which makes this inequality a possible cause of war.

The so-called claim for *Lebensraum* will be dealt with in another chapter. Lord Stamp does not mention the sinister fact that by massacring or deporting the population of a defeated country, room may be made for colonisation. This method was employed by the Assyrians and Babylonians, and by Christian nations in the twentieth century. Wars of extermination—“total war”—may seem to be profitable for a time; but sooner or later those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. History confirms our Lord’s words.

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If from the causes of war we turn to the consequences of war, our task is easy, so easy as to be almost unnecessary. The first Great War cost ten million lives, apart from the pandemic of influenza which may have been a consequence of it. The amount of bitter suffering which these figures represent cannot be overstated. And how great was the value to the race of the lives so sacrificed? War is the most dysgenic of all agencies. It slays the young and healthy and spares the old and the weak. "*Immer der Krieg verschlingt die Besten,*" as Schiller says. "Castile makes men and wastes them," says a Spanish writer. Havelock Ellis quotes other testimonies. Starr Jordan says that war, by reversing selection, causes vigorous nations to become effeminate. This opinion may, I think, be confirmed by history. Ripley, in his book on the races of Europe, concludes that "standing armies overload succeeding generations with inferior types of men." Arthur Thomson says that biologically war means the reversal of natural selection. I reserve this question for my chapter on population; the evidence is not quite simple. I am not altogether convinced that the Napoleonic wars shortened the height and diminished the physical courage of Frenchmen, though this has been stated; but, as Ellis says, "there can be no doubt that most kinds of infirmities become more frequent as a result of military selection." It would be easy to make out a sad list of most promising lives cut short by the two recent wars. We may

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think of the Grenfells, Sorley, and Rupert Brooke. Ellis mentions a brilliant young physiologist from Australia, Gordon Mathison; and Moseley, who died at Gallipoli, had already won a great reputation in natural science. Many of us can remember less known names of lads who would have won fame for themselves and honour for their country.

William McDougall in his *Janus*<sup>1</sup> predicts only too truly what would happen in "the next Great War":

"The civilian population, and especially the populations of the great cities, will be the first and greatest sufferers. Wounds, mutilation and death will be broadcast among them with awful impartiality; no woman, no little child, no church, no treasury of art, no museum of priceless antiquities, no shrine of learning and science will be immune; in a few days or hours great cities may be levelled with the dust, while their surviving inhabitants scrape for crusts amid mangled bodies of fair women and the ruins of the monuments of art and science."

Winston Churchill wrote in 1924 an ominous warning which few regarded:

"It is probable—nay, certain—that among the means which will next time be available will be agencies and processes of destruction wholesale, unlimited, and perhaps, once launched, uncontrollable."

War also spreads venereal disease, which Sir William Osler thought is third or fourth among killing diseases, and which causes an appalling amount of shame and misery.

Further, there can be no doubt that the effects of

<sup>1</sup> Published in the To-day and To-morrow series by Kegan Paul.

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war are profoundly demoralising. Campaigning may call forth some fine qualities, though it cannot create them; barrack life is no school of decent behaviour. A man who has been carefully drilled to kick an enemy in the groin, and to twist the bayonet so as to leave a jagged wound, is not likely to retain his humane feelings quite unimpaired. Our country, long distinguished for a decent respect for private property, has been disgraced by wholesale pilfering and wanton destructiveness, and in most belligerent countries the output of manual labour has shrunk ominously. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." It is not likely that it would.

As for the destruction of wealth, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler says impressively:

"With the money wasted in the Great War we could have built a £500 house with £200 of furniture and placed it on five acres of ground worth £20 an acre for every family in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, France, Belgium, Germany and Russia. There would have been enough left over to give every city of 20,000 inhabitants in all these countries a million-pound library and a two-million-pound university. Out of the balance we could have set aside a sum at five per cent. interest which would have paid for all time a £200 salary for 125,000 teachers and 125,000 nurses. Having done all this, we could have bought up all France and Belgium and everything they possessed. That was the price paid twenty years ago. What will be the price next time?"

And yet there have not been wanting writers who have sung the praises of war. Our own classical authors, Bacon and Hobbes, are among the guilty.

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It is a little strange that in the Anglican Articles of Religion, which say that at the command of a magistrate a Christian may take up arms, the word *iusta* before *bella*, which appears in the Latin form, has been omitted. Jeremy Taylor, echoing the notorious words of Luther, says that "war is the rod of God in the hands of princes." Proudhon, we may not be surprised to learn, regards war as the most sublime phenomenon of our moral life, a sign of human greatness. More recently, Ruskin has some deplorable remarks to the same effect. But the worst examples come from Germany. Hegel says: "War invigorates humanity, as storms preserve the seas from putrescence." Moltke declared that war is an integral part of God's universe, developing man's noblest attributes! "The condemnation of war is absurd and immoral," says Treitschke. An Austrian theologian says that a history of the world without war would be a history of materialism and degeneration.

The soldiers have thought differently. Wellington said: "If you had seen one day of actual warfare you would pray God that you might never see an hour of another." The American Sherman wrote: "It is only those who have neither heard a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more devastation. War is hell."

Such language as that of Hegel, Moltke and Treitschke would be inconceivable in any self-respecting English writer to-day, though it is not

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very long since distinguished men wrote in defence of this ancient institution. We had a comparatively mild though vulgar and blatant fit of militant imperialism in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the word "jingo" enriched our language. It is only fair to remember that we are perhaps more vitally interested in peace than any other nation, both because we have so much to lose and because, owing to our overpopulation, we are in danger of a horrible fate if we were ever defeated in a great war. But our pacifism is neither ignoble nor self-regarding. The conscience of the world is with us, even in Germany, where an observer said that in the years before 1939 the people were even more desirous of peace than our countrymen. This was not true in 1914. Heering says that in 1927, when Lord Ponsonby's Peace Movement was extended to the Continent, 137,000 men and women signed the pledge in the Rhineland and Westphalia alone.

No doubt the social prestige of the officer class, much higher on the Continent than with us, has contributed to the admiration of militarism. But while condemning unsparingly these atrocious sentiments, we must admit that there is a set of base pacifists who abuse Dr. Johnson's too often quoted words (no one ever loved his country better than Samuel Johnson) that patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

I will conclude this chapter by a brief summary

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of the plans which have at various times been proposed for the establishment of a lasting peace, and by a suggestion of our reasonable hopes and fears for the future.

It is plain that war might be ended in three ways. There might be no more resistance. There might be no more aggression. There might be some super-national organisation strong enough to prohibit a resort to violence. The first would follow a knock-out blow by the strongest Power. This was how Rome established a relatively stable peace between the end of the civil wars under Augustus and the break-up of the Western Empire. It would mean the final surrender of the principle of a balance of power. This temporary solution was made possible because the Roman Empire consisted of city states or cantons enjoying some local independence. There were no powerful nations whose desire for self-government had to be suppressed. The Hellenistic monarchies did not answer to this description. In the Dark and Middle Ages the ideas of a universal empire and a universal Church were not formally abandoned. I believe the service-books of the Roman Church still contain a prayer for "the Emperor," the Emperor being the Basileus of Constantinople, who ceased to reign in 1453. The phantom Holy Roman Empire, "neither holy nor Roman nor an Empire," was extinguished in the Napoleonic Wars, and the ambition to establish a universal Church, though still cherished in the

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dreams of some churchmen, will certainly never be fulfilled. But several attempts have been made to upset the balance of power in favour of one aggressive nation. Hitherto, as I have said, it has been the fortune of Great Britain to foil all such attempts by means of coalitions. The last attempt, made by Germany, to dominate Europe and so the whole of the old world, was formidable enough; but the force of nationalism was too strong for Hitler, as it was for Napoleon. The menace of Russia is now greater, and it does not seem possible for us to save Europe again. Nevertheless, I do not think that a Russian attempt at world conquest would succeed. I am told on good authority that the hatred and terror which the name of the Soviet republic inspires through the eastern half of Europe cannot be exaggerated. Russian armies are very strong in defending their own country; they have been less successful as invaders. Still, the danger exists, and must not be forgotten.

The second method, the end of aggression, is what all must hope for. It postulates a change of heart, but this may be made easier by the knowledge that war has become a thing too dreadful to contemplate. I must return to this possibility at the end of this chapter. There was a widespread opinion, proved to be baseless at the outbreak of war in 1914, that either the complicated structure of international finance or the organised internationalism of labour would make war impossible or bring it to an early

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end. Some predicted a general strike as soon as war was declared. The collapse of resistance to war caused general surprise. It showed that at present the love of country is too strong for sectional loyalties. The wage-earners were not slow to exploit the bargaining power which their country's danger gave them, but they would not betray their country for the International. To prefer the larger loyalty to the smaller is generally a sign of grace.

Julius Caesar found two characteristics among the Gauls—love of soldiering and of clever talk. Although the French have shown both qualities, they have taken the lead in devising agreements against war. About 1590 Sully proposed a Council of European Nations, to regulate disputes among Christian States. Twelve Powers had promised their co-operation; Queen Elizabeth gave the pledge for England; but the murder of Henri IV brought the plan to nothing. The proposal of the Abbé de Saint Pierre has been mentioned already. But we may pass over other abortive schemes and come to the League of Nations. It is a sad story. We began with faith and went on with hope; now there is nothing left but charity.

The last of President Wilson's Fourteen Points—“*Quatorze commandements!*” said Clemenceau; “*le bon Dieu n'a que dix*”—ran as follows: “A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial

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integrity to great and small States alike.” “What we are striving for,” said the President, “is a new international order based upon the broad and universal principles of right and justice. Peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about as if they were mere chattels and pawns of a game.” Germany was at first excluded from the League. The revulsion against war was so strong that the architects of the League hoped that the world had reached a turning-point, and that henceforth war would be regarded as a barbarous anachronism. The Covenant of the League was incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles. Its object was “to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, and by a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations.” Article 16 of the Covenant laid down that “Should any member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants, it shall be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League, who hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade and financial relations.” Very high hopes were entertained. Even so wise a statesman as Field-Marshal Smuts was “confident that the League will prove a path of escape for Europe out of the ruin brought about by this war.”

Although it was handicapped from the start by the abstention of the United States, the League settled disputes between Italy and Greece, and between Greece and Bulgaria; it helped to find

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homes in Greece for a million Greek refugees from Asia Minor, and it gave financial aid to Austria and Hungary. Germany was admitted to the League; Brazil and Spain withdrew. The Kellogg Pact was intended to strengthen the position of the League, and the Treaty of Locarno, suggested by Briand and Austen Chamberlain, evoked great enthusiasm in 1925.

But from 1930 the League suffered a series of humiliating rebuffs. Quite suddenly, as it seemed, idealism was discarded, and its place was taken by brute force and shameless perfidy. In 1933 Germany withdrew from the League, and three years later Great Britain felt herself obliged to rearm. The willingness of the League of Nations to intervene was tested by the Japanese in Manchuria, and by the Italians in Abyssinia. In both cases the League was unable—really unable—to act. The French were naturally reluctant to drive Italy into the arms of Germany. But the League never recovered from these two defeats. Collective security had proved a broken reed; the small nations had reason to fear for their national existence.

It is not the first time that an outburst of humanitarian enthusiasm has been followed by a peculiarly atrocious war. More than one cynical publicist has said that nothing else is to be expected. The will to peace was never universal, and unhappily it takes only one to make a quarrel. The French, who are seldom good Europeans, wanted security, and

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hoped to gain it by keeping Germany down, which was impossible, by supporting the League, by the "Little Entente," and by friendship with Great Britain, who wanted security only through stable peace and disarmament. Hitler and his gang, after 1932, cared nothing for the aims of the League, and Japan was preparing to gamble for high stakes. "We have only to wait," a Japanese said, "till Europe has completed her *hara-kiri*."

The League was a premature experiment, and it failed. But I shall argue that something of the kind must be tried again within the next fifty years, unless the civilised world is really ready to commit suicide. It was commonly said after the First Great War that a second would be the death of civilisation. The second stroke was not averted; future historians will decide whether it was indeed a mortal blow. There can be very little doubt what the result of a third would be.

The first thing which must be realised is that modern war is a very different thing from anything that the world has known before. It is often said that the Thirty Years War was the culmination of barbarity in warfare. It is said to have reduced the population of Germany by one-third. But the Germans and the other belligerents, including ourselves, have now done things which have never been done before. The atrocities in the Thirty Years War were partly due to religious animosities—religious bigotry is the most cruel of all passions—

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but they were mainly the work of mercenary armies living on the country. Mercenaries are not overkeen to kill or be killed; but plunder, fire-raising, and rape are very much to their taste. Nationalism hardly counted at all in the Thirty Years War. Tilly was a Belgian, Piccalomini an Italian; Wallenstein was killed by mercenaries from Scotland and Ireland. At the Battle of Rheinfeldern, the German army was commanded by Meroy, a Frenchman, the French army by the German Duke of Weimar.

The wars of religion aroused intense disgust in the age which followed them. It was hoped that the discredit which had fallen upon religious fanaticism would remove the chief cause of war. There followed a period when wars, though frequent, were conducted without bitterness; war itself was regarded as an evil and moribund institution.

“The European nations,” Gibbon wrote, “are exercised by temperate and indecisive contests. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own or the neighbouring kingdoms may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general sense of happiness, the system of acts and laws and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies.”

Why has war been keyed up to an unexampled atrocity? Arnold Toynbee speaks of the driving forces of individualism and democracy, and concludes that democracy has been the dominant factor. But we cannot make democracy responsible for Treitschke, Hitler, or Stalin; and industrialism,

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if it knows its business, is pacific and international. The villains, in my opinion, are nationalism and science: nationalism in deifying the parochial State, and science in perfecting diabolical engines of destruction. However that may be, war in the eighteenth century did comparatively little harm.

“Eighteenth-century armies were not recruited by conscription; they did not live off the country like their predecessors in the wars of religion, nor did they wipe the country out of existence like the armies in the war of 1914–1918; eighteenth-century commanders observed the rules of the military game; eighteenth-century governments set themselves moderate objectives and did not impose crushing peace terms upon defeated opponents.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1770 the Comte de Guibert wrote:

“To-day the whole of Europe is civilised. Wars have become less cruel. Except in combat no blood is shed; prisoners are respected; towns are no longer destroyed; the country is no more ravaged. Conquered peoples are only obliged to pay some sort of contributions, which are often less than the taxes they paid to their own sovereigns.”

Nothing illustrates the change in what was thought legitimate in war better than the obloquy which Louis XIV incurred by the devastation of the Palatinate, and Great Britain by the deportation of 8,000 French colonists from Nova Scotia. Even in the Napoleonic Wars, Napoleon was thought to have transgressed the laws of civilised war by interning British subjects who were living or travelling in France when the two countries were at war. Sterne in his *Sentimental Journey* represents an

<sup>1</sup> Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. IV, p. 145.

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Englishman travelling quite comfortably in France and visiting in French houses in wartime. As for the treatment of the conquered, the French headed a successful coalition against us to help the revolting American colonies. At the end of the war we were beaten and had to evacuate the thirteen States who claimed their independence; but the French left us in possession of Canada, which was mainly inhabited by Frenchmen, and had been ceded by France only twenty years before. It is equally surprising, from our present point of view, that the French Canadians seem to have been quite content. The only people who felt themselves ill-used were the United Empire Loyalists, whose existence in the United States was made so intolerable that they migrated to Canada or the West Indies. We may think of what would happen to us now if we were defeated in a great war. We should lose all our overseas possessions, and it is quite possible that half our population would die of hunger.

Modern war must mean total war, in which there is no distinction between soldiers and civilians, and no limits to the miseries that men will suffer or to the atrocities which they will commit. The enormity of war thus conducted was plain enough before the discovery of the atomic bomb, but this ghastly invention must silence all objectors. Assuming that before long all the chief nations will have learned the secret, the Western countries, including Germany, could destroy each other in a week; and

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though Russia and the United States, with their more scattered towns, could hold out rather longer, they are by no means invulnerable. It is often forgotten that as early as 1918 the belligerents were in possession of secrets not less horrible than the atomic bomb.<sup>1</sup>

I am rather hopeful that at last lessons of sanity and decency will be learned, and that this hideous enormity will go the way of cannibalism, human sacrifice, judicial torture, and religious persecution. The choice is indeed between life and death, and it must be made soon. We must pray for a new spirit in the peoples and their rulers. Canon Grane, a veteran champion of peace, quotes from Hans Delbrück, my kind host in 1911.

“Cannot Britons rid themselves of the nightmare that Germany wants war with England? We know perfectly well that war has nothing to bring us even if we should win. We should only find ourselves in the desperate position of Napoleon I, masters of Europe, with all Europe united to compass our overthrow.”

These were perfectly honest words, and yet it was a prophetic nightmare. “I believe with the full intensity of personal conviction,” wrote Admiral Mahan, “that when moral motives come to weigh heavier than material desires, there will be no more war.” Moral motives have now been reinforced by the most cogent material motives that have ever been offered to humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Details may be found in W. L. Grane’s *War, Its Curse and Cure* (Allen and Unwin), pp. 124–7; and in McDougall’s *Janus* (To-day and To-morrow series, Kegan Paul), pp. 24–8.

IV

THE TWILIGHT OF FREEDOM



## IV

### THE TWILIGHT OF FREEDOM

LIKE other words expressing ideals, Freedom needs definition. Montesquieu in the eighteenth century says that "there is no word that admits of more varied meanings, and has made more different impressions on the human mind."

"Some," he proceeds, "have annexed this name to one form of government exclusive of others; those who had republican tastes applied it to this form of polity; those who lived under a monarchical government gave it to monarchy. They have all applied it to the form of government best suited to their customs and inclinations."

We must distinguish between negative and positive freedom. Political freedom has meant freedom from coercion, from arbitrary power. This conception of negative freedom may be extended to mean release from conditions which prevent a man from leading the life of a free man, such as extreme poverty or grinding toil. Positive freedom has often meant the enjoyment of rights and privileges, which in the Middle Ages were called liberties.

The rule of law means a limitation of arbitrary power. Declarations of rights are of this character. They protect the citizen from such encroachments on his liberty as government censorship of the Press and of free speech, imprisonment without trial, and

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laws which curtail reasonable freedom of action. Such rights are seldom respected in times of revolution, and are likely to be abridged in a desperate war.

Kant's maxim that a human being must always be treated as an end, not as a means, implies that human life has a value in itself. The right to life is the first of natural rights, which can only be forfeited in extreme cases.

But there is another kind of Freedom, which is more important still, for without it all other Freedoms are precarious and illusory. A man must win freedom from his own lower nature, and, as Burke said, the less discipline there is within, the more need is there for coercion without. This last caution is of venerable antiquity. Aristotle says: "Free men are least of all allowed to act on the spur of the moment; almost everything is prescribed to them." Cicero is aware that democracy, from want of discipline, is often the prelude to tyranny. The free man who, as Spinoza says, seldom thinks of death, is a brave man. "Happiness is Freedom, and Freedom is courage," says Aristotle. Take away fear, and the battle of Freedom is half won. Fear, and hatred the brother of fear, keep men in bondage. Thomas Aquinas, in explaining the liberty of the Christian man, quotes three fine texts from St. Paul, which justify the claim that the service of God is perfect Freedom. "Ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the

Spirit of adoption.” “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” “If ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law.” We remember the fine old adage: “He who serves himself serves a slave; he who rules himself rules a king.”

The right to fundamental liberties depends on our acceptance of Natural Law, on which I have said something in commenting upon Christopher Dawson. Natural rights are the court of appeal for all who think that they are unjustly treated. No doubt Nature is a word of doubtful meaning. “Nature is a rum ‘un,” said Mr. Squeers. When we speak of a man being in a state of nature we are talking theology. Man *in puris naturalibus* is man before the grace of the tailor. But the Law of Nature has had great importance in human thought. I cannot imagine why Ritchie says that “the theory of natural rights is simply the outgrowth of the Protestant revolt against the authority of tradition.” It is very much older than Luther, and has nothing to do with individualism, but a great deal to do with belief in absolute right and wrong, between nature and convention, between *phusis* and *nomos*—as the Greeks said—a difference, an unkind don said, which women never understand. Right and wrong are not created by acts of parliament. The interest of the *Antigone* of Sophocles lies in the conflict between the laws of God and the laws of man. Antigone is forbidden to give her brother a decent burial; she says that the State has no right to make

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such a law. Plato, after discussing and, as he hopes, refuting the Sophistic doctrine that the State can do no wrong, one of those poisonous doctrines which are scotched but never killed, sums up the aim of his great treatise on Justice when he says: "Our inquiry into the nature of absolute justice has been undertaken with the object of finding an ideal, that men may judge of their actual condition by the standard which that ideal sets up."

But the doctrine of Natural Law owes most to the Stoics. For them, the Law of Nature is the Law of God. How are we to ascertain what this law ordains? "By universal consent," was their answer. They came to distinguish between the Law of Nature and international law (*ius gentium*), by which Roman magistrates decided cases when one of the litigants was a foreigner. The Stoic jurist Ulpian is the author of the great maxim that "by the Law of Nature all men were born free."

This doctrine was accepted by the Christians. Origen says: "We obey the laws of the State only when they agree with the divine law; when they contradict divine and *natural* law we must obey God alone." This has always been the doctrine of the Church. "An unjust law is no law," says Suarez. But there was an obvious difficulty. Under the relative Law of Nature political and social institutions claim our obedience, though in the golden age, or in paradise, they would not exist. These institutions are in part a penalty for sin and in part a

remedy for it. Does this theory deny the right of resistance? On the whole, Catholic casuists justify rebellion against a thoroughly bad Government; but on the other side the divine right of kings was maintained. James I argued that if his rule was bad, his subjects must submit to it, for their sins. The English people ended by deciding that, sinful as they no doubt were, they had not deserved the Jameses. In the Middle Ages another dualism—that between natural and supernatural law—almost took the place of the double Law of Nature. But attempts were made to follow the absolute Law of Nature in the monasteries, and rebellious bodies of what Troeltsch calls the sect-type refused to admit that anything short of the absolute Law should be accepted by Christians. It was said of the Levellers and Diggers in the time of Cromwell that “though the laws and customs of a kingdom be never so plain and clear against their ways, yet they will not submit, but cry out for natural rights derived from Adam and right reason.”

The growth of national States and of capitalism complicated the problem. But Blackstone in 1765 still urges that “the principal aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature.” These include personal liberty, personal security, and personal property. The American Declaration of Independence (1776) regards it as “self-evident that all men are endowed

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by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The French in 1789 defined liberty as the right to do anything that does not harm others. "Property is an inviolable and sacred right," and this was reasserted in 1793, when the right of bequest was explicitly mentioned. Of course all natural rights may be forfeited. A murderer forfeits the right to life, a burglar to liberty, a swindler to the enjoyment of his property. And few people doubt that the State has the right to impose taxes, though the constitutional maxim, "No taxation without representation," now flagrantly disregarded, is on the whole sound.

Belief in Natural Rights is, of course, flatly denied by the worshippers of the State, like the Nazis and Fascists and the disciples of Hegel. A prominent opponent was that redoubtable reformer Jeremy Bentham, who maintained that "right is the child of law; from real laws come real rights, but from imaginary laws, from laws of nature, come imaginary rights, a bastard brood of monsters." The opposite extreme is exemplified by William Godwin, who says that "law is an institution of the most pernicious tendency." Mary Shelley, who had had enough of Godwinism, was pressed to send her son to a school "where they will teach him to think for himself." "O my God, no!" she exclaimed; "teach him to think like other people." She sent him to Harrow and Trinity, Cambridge. The treatment

seems to have been successful. The best government, as Jefferson said, is that which governs least. "The more corrupt the government, the greater number of its laws," says Tacitus. There is something to say for this view.

It may be worth while to consider briefly the views of two famous champions of Freedom in the last century—Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. Spencer was a very typical Englishman, a born rebel against authority; the dissidence of Dissent clung to him to the end. "The man *versus* the State" was Herbert *contra mundum*. His defence of Natural Law was partly philosophical, based on a rather superficial study of Coleridge, who interpreted Hegel as teaching that history is the progressive evolution of a spiritual principle, and partly scientific. He was an enthusiastic supporter of Darwin, but almost the only thing he took from him was the beneficent law of the survival of the fittest. The Victorians thought that the fittest meant the best and most valuable, not the bug and the cockroach, but our noble selves. Whether teleology is immanent or transcendent, the scales, according to him, are tilted on the side of merit. He called his chief book *Social Statics*, but his philosophy was dynamic optimism. He began by talking of society as an organism, like the human body, and amused himself by comparing arteries and nerves to railway lines and telegraph wires. It is a most misleading comparison. Organisms and organisations are very

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different things. An organisation may change into an organism, as we see in the social insects, which have established a civilisation rather like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.<sup>1</sup> The individual ant, bee or termite is an individual no longer. He is a mere cog in a machine; and in order to be a more dependable automaton he has lost his reason, if he ever had any (and I am inclined to think he had). The drones are stilettoed by their maiden aunts; the worker ants are sexless and wingless; the termite workers are blind. This state of equilibrium, from which there can be no escape, is the logical end of State Socialism, which Spencer abhorred above all things; so he dropped his social organism.

Spencer saw clearly the connection of militarism with the loss of liberty. What he failed to see was that the ruthless industrialism in the first half of the nineteenth century was itself the result of war—first to enable us to wear down Napoleon, and then to recover from the war. It was forced upon us, but it was not Freedom for the majority. It might be added that *laissez-faire* does not forbid combinations, whether of employers aiming at monopolies or of trade unions aiming at a privileged position for labour, and this is no victory for Freedom. Spencer was also mistaken when he considered industrialism and militarism as irreconcilable enemies. The Germans discovered that they may play into each other's hands. But still, this sturdy Victorian was a

<sup>1</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chatto and Windus.

true prophet. "Socialism means slavery, and the slavery will not be mild." Was he entirely wrong when he called Socialism the new Toryism? Gladstone once said in conversation: "If Socialism ever becomes a power in this country, it will be the work of the Tory Party." He was thinking of Disraeli; but when I gave a lecture at Ashridge I found that the young Tories were setting their sails to catch the popular breeze. "We must go with the flowing tide," they said. "Any dead dog can do that," I replied, "and any live dog can lick his master's boots; but we want something better from you."

Mill in his famous treatise on *Liberty* shows a clearer and less one-sided view of the whole subject than Spencer. He recognises the right of combination, and that Freedom requires restraint of anti-social conduct, so that the problem is how to establish some measure of social control without destroying individual independence. He is also emphatic that liberty of conscience, which includes liberty of speech, and of framing our habits in accordance with what we think right, is the foundation of liberty. "The right to think, to know, to utter," said Milton, "is the dearest of all liberties." Nevertheless, Mill is alarmed at the increasing power of the State, and also at the danger of a meddlesome public opinion, which, as he says, was much less troublesome in the Middle Ages. He might have added that it is more inquisitive in

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democratic America than it was in Tsarist Russia.

I should like to add here a quotation from Einstein, which I have already used in a published lecture:

“If we want to resist the powers which threaten to suppress intellectual and individual freedom, we must keep clearly before us what is at stake. Without such freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Faraday, no Pasteur, no Lister. There would be no comfortable houses for the people, no railways, no wireless, no protection against epidemics, no cheap books, no culture, no enjoyment of art for all. Only men who are free can create the works which make life worth living.”

This perhaps goes too far. A tyrannical government may encourage applied science. But it is possibly true that under the new order with which we are threatened the independent amateur in learning, research, scientific experiment, and the arts, to whom our country in particular owes so much of its achievement, may be squeezed out with the rest of the upper middle class; and also that business enterprise will offer no inducement, since profits are confiscated by the government, and losses fall on the individual. The able man of business who in the last century built up a useful industry will in the future be a salaried manager, honest and competent but unenterprising and content with routine efficiency. We see already that our young people are content to play for safety, which often means some petty office under the ever encroaching bureaucratic machine.

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I was much impressed by an article in *The Times Literary Supplement* in March, 1923, from which I copied the following extract:

“The real danger is not to civilisation but to liberty. The effect of the progress of science is to give small bodies of men dominion over large numbers. Even in Turkey and Persia the central governments have been growing stronger against the provinces. Perhaps the idea of nineteenth century Liberalism, that we were moving towards a completer Democracy, may seem to future historians to have been the transitory dream of an epoch. We may really be moving towards an organisation of the world under a Power which combines the characteristics of a political despotism and a great commercial trust. If the choice is between chaos and despotism, most men in desperation prefer despotism. A people is soon cowed by a government strong enough to strike down its leaders. The one hope in the world seems to be that we should not pass into the state of violent struggles, whether war between nations or class war.”

Unhappily, the writer’s one hope has proved illusory. It is undoubtedly true that some modern inventions, notably the bombing aeroplane, have made an armed rising against the government almost impossible. The mob is no longer formidable. The new facilities of propaganda are also in favour of the central power. It is also true that if men have to choose between chaos and despotism they will generally choose despotism. In fact the progress of Freedom is obstructed quite as much by the many who like to obey as by the few who wish to rule. W. K. Clifford says angrily: “There is one thing more wicked than the desire to command,

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and that is the will to obey.” The ruler, whether he calls himself king or emperor or dictator or by any of the new titles, is clothed with semi-divine attributes, and the sentiment of loyalty, one of the noblest in human nature, attaches itself to his unworthy person. The safeguard against tyranny is orderly government, and such a system of checks and balances as existed under the late lamented British constitution.

Tradition, the force of tabus, and mere habit, are strong conservative forces. But these may be undermined, as they were by the French *philosophes* before the revolution, or defeat in war may destroy the prestige of existing institutions. Equilibriums are always transient. As Abraham Lincoln said: “It has always been a grave question whether any government not too strong for the liberties of the people will be strong enough to maintain its existence in grave emergencies.” So George Washington said: “Government is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.” The question of prestige is important. Governments which make no emotional appeal are easily upset. Examples are the fate of the restored Bourbons, who were brought back by the victorious allies, that of Louis Philippe, and the Weimar Republic, associated with a humiliating peace.

Too sudden changes are unfavourable to Freedom; and, as I have said, every revolutionary government makes it its first object to prevent any further revolution. New vested interests are created

at once. It is not true historically that all tyrannies are short-lived.

There are some who honestly abhor political tyranny, but are actually in favour of economic dictatorship. An American planner has said that "political democracy can remain if it confines itself to all but economic matter." The regulation of economics is to be handed over to some non-democratic authority. The reason given, no doubt, is that money and our use of it are not supremely important, and that we should be more free if these anxieties and worries were taken off our hands. In a sense every Christian must agree with this. Our Lord's first and last word on economics was: "Who made me a judge or a divider over you? Take heed and beware of all covetousness." It is a question of the standard of values; and the Christian standard ranks the paraphernalia of life, all that goes beyond "food and raiment, with which we should be content," very low in the scale, compared with "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." On the other hand, Hilaire Belloc has said not untruly that "the control of the production of wealth is the control of human life itself." We are considering the question here as it bears on personal freedom.

From this point of view money is of great importance, because it gives us a range of choice which would be impossible without it. Abuse has been heaped on the "economic man," the supposed hero of Samuel Smiles, and we are exhorted to work "for

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use and not for profit," which I consider a rather silly phrase. Does the purely economic man really exist? There are some men who collect stocks and shares as other men collect first editions or postage stamps. They must be judged as collectors, a queer race who are tolerated and not despised. Men's ultimate motives are seldom economic. It is true that some men, especially, I think, in Calvinistic societies, are so much absorbed in the pursuit of wealth that they forget the objects for which they desire it, and are perhaps incapable of enjoying the luxuries which they have the means of buying. The Parisians said of the Americans: "They come here and buy our wine and our women; they can't enjoy either of them." The collector enjoys his game, which as a game is much better than collecting postage stamps. A Yorkshire clergyman told me that he remonstrated with a parishioner who went on slaving at his office after making a large fortune. "You know your son will play ducks and drakes with your money when you are gone." "Mr. X," said the old man, "if it gives him as much pleasure to spend my money as it has given me to make it, I don't grudge it to him." But most people value money as giving them the choice of gratifying their tastes. If we lose some of our money, we can choose which of our comforts we can dispense with as unimportant to us. If an omnipotent State forbids us to travel abroad and to buy foreign books, and prevents us in many other ways from leading our own

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life according to our desires, our liberty is gone, even if we are provided with "social services" at the expense of the taxpayer. The planners will not allow a man to choose his occupation, or to change it after he has chosen. Even the way a man may spend his leisure is prescribed in Russia, and was in Germany.

Field-Marshal Smuts thinks that there is less freedom in Europe now than at any time for two thousand years. Even as an ideal it is derided. No alternative is offered; no arguments are used. The enemies of Freedom do not argue; they shout and they shoot.

The conditions under the new police State, now existing under the "Vichy" governments established by Russia in eastern Europe, have been well described by Salvemini.<sup>1</sup> It is a joke in Moscow that there may be any number of political parties—one in power, the others in jail. All free associations are outlawed. Not only political associations, but trade unions, charitable institutions, athletic clubs and the like must be directed by men enjoying the confidence of the men in power. Daily papers, reviews and all other agencies of information must be run by men subservient to the party. Books are suppressed, confiscated or burnt; judges, public officials and teachers are dismissed from their posts; professional men are not allowed to carry on their professions if their opinions do not agree with those of

<sup>1</sup> In *Freedom* (1942), Allen and Unwin.

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the dominant party. Ministers of the Churches must either keep silent or join in singing the official anthems. The priests in Russia are commanded to divulge what they hear in confession. Elections are either abolished or reduced to a sham. The personal liberty of the subjects, their property and their privacy, are at the discretion of the police. Opponents are not tried by independent judges, but by administrative courts, and have no guarantees of a fair trial. In short, all political and personal rights are discarded. This is a true description of the most frightful tyranny that the world has ever known. It prevails at the present moment over a large part of the surface of the globe, inhabited by white men and women. We may be surprised to hear Trotsky saying: "In a country where the sole employer is the State, opposition means death by slow starvation. The old principle, he who does not work shall not eat, has been replaced by a new one; he who does not obey shall not eat."

The Roman poet Lucan says scornfully that you can preserve the shadow of liberty if you will whatever you are ordered to do.<sup>1</sup> But it is only the shadow of liberty that is so preserved. "Those that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety," said Benjamin Franklin, "deserve neither liberty nor safety." "They are slaves who dare not be in the right with two or three." I will quote some lines of Cowper, who I fear is seldom read now:

<sup>1</sup> *Libertas, cuius servaveris umbram si quidquid iubeare velis.*

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Whose freedom is by sufferance, and at will  
Of a superior, he is never free.

Who lives, and is not weary of a life  
Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.

In another place Cowper, like the Cavalier poet for whom “stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage,” extols the liberty of heart of which tyrants cannot rob us:

But there is yet a liberty unsung  
By poets, and by senators unpraised,  
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers  
Of earth and hell confederate take away;  
A liberty which persecution, fraud,  
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;  
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.  
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,  
Bought with His blood Who gave it to mankind.

We are witnessing a reversal of the long process of emancipation which began at the Reformation. Our people gained their freedom from a foreign priesthood, from the threatened increase in the power of the monarchy, and from the relics of feudalism. The change may be illustrated from the decline in the prestige of the House of Commons. Burke in 1774 said:

“It ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable.”

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What now remains of this freedom of conscience, which made the position of a member of parliament honoured and respected? He is now a mere delegate, a machine for recording votes dictated by others. The debates are reduced to a farce; they change scarcely any votes. It is no wonder that so little interest is taken in them that the most popular newspapers do not print them. The common opinion now is that politics is a dirty trade.

Another cause of the change is the relative decline in the power and prestige of this country. The nineteenth century saw the culmination of Britain as a Great Power. Our ideals, our ways of living, our institutions, were a model for other nations; we seemed to be in process of setting the fashion for the civilised world. From a variety of causes, most of them inevitable, the centre of gravity has moved away from us. The future clearly belongs to countries with a much larger area, and, I should add, to countries where the workman gives better value for his wages. The Germans in their own opinion, which was shared by many others, were the heirs of our lost pre-eminence. They had their own methods, which were very unlike ours, and because we were slow to realise what they called the world-revolution, they regarded us as soft and decadent. The word "Western" came to have a new meaning, no longer European as opposed to Asiatic, but the ways of the nations bordering on the Atlantic, and in particular Great Britain, as opposed

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to central Europeans. Some of the Germans also predicted a revolution in the United States. Democracy and Freedom became words of contempt; they belonged to an outmoded view of society.

The loss of our prestige in foreign countries may be only temporary, and there may be a strong undercurrent of admiration. We have always been abused, envied, and imitated. The condition of continental Europe is so chaotic that no one can say what will come of it. Our chief enemy is Communism, supported by near-communists at home, who, as Halévy has observed, hate and despise Liberalism much more than Toryism. And yet it may be more true that we are all Liberals than that we are all Socialists. But at home there is a widespread and growing fear that we are losing our liberties. This fear seems to take three forms.

First, there is a distrust of the tendency to administer the law by Orders in Council, which deprive the citizen of the security of an appeal to the Courts. This danger has been emphasised by some of our prominent lawyers. I am not competent to discuss this question.

Next, there is an apparently well-grounded alarm at the power of the trade unions, which threatens to establish in our country a one-party government, suspiciously like the Nazi or Fascist governments which we fought, and risked our very existence, to destroy. Basic freedoms, we have lately been told,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the *Sunday Times*, October, 1946.

are already in process of destruction. Conditions are being imposed which will deny to men and women the right to earn their living unless they support one party. The unions into which all workers are being driven are all linked with one political party. The next step may be to claim that this party represents the nation, and that it is the only party for which the mass of electors can properly vote. All workers must belong to unions affiliated to the T.U.C., which means that the validity of a union is determined by its conformity to the notions of those who control a mass of other unions. Unless a man belongs to a union so validated he has great difficulty in finding employment. The unions are ambitious to inflate their own power by control of national monopolies, in which the closed shop would be law. At every stage minority opinion, the representation of which is a condition of true democracy, is overborne and silenced. Labour becomes a State-party, and a State-party is meaningless unless it controls a party-State. A nation cannot remain half free and half unfree. We are on the road to serfdom.

There are, however, two things which the Labour Party cannot control; one is Labour, the other is Economic Law. The unions have a very imperfect control over the shop stewards and the rank and file of the workers. They have attempted to check the most subversive elements among their own supporters. There may be a revolt against regimentation,

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proceeding from both political extremes. Moreover, there are still general elections, in which the dominance of one political party may be reversed. The danger certainly exists, but there are still means of averting it.

The ultimate decision rests not with any organisation, but with Economic Law, which is too often disregarded in political disputes. Nature, says my favourite philosopher Plotinus, is not in the habit of talking. With her it is a word and a blow, and the blow first. There is not much steam behind nationalisation, though State-capitalism is the successor of Communism and is likely to be tried in most countries. Our workers wish for shorter hours, higher wages, and an increase in "social services" at the expense of the taxpayer. Looking at the condition of the world at present, is there any possibility of these wishes being realised, especially in a country like our own, which cannot feed itself and depends for its existence on foreign trade?

Mr. Colin Clark, a recognised expert on statistics, published, shortly before the war, the following statement of the relative standards of life in several countries, measured in "international units." The figures represent "real wages," not nominal receipts. The highest numbers are for the United States and Canada. Then follow Great Britain, 1,059; France 684; Germany 646; Japan 353; Italy 343. The disparity in our favour is no doubt now greater. We can hardly wonder if our rivals ask

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what is the justification for our privileged position, since no one can suggest that the British workman is more energetic or more skilful than the German or the Frenchman. It seems to me quite certain that our period of privilege is coming to an end, and that there must be some equalisation of the rewards of labour in different countries. That this equalisation can be effected by raising the standard of living on the Continent to our level is quite impossible. For many years to come conditions on the Continent must be very hard, and no one who knows Germany can doubt that the Germans will make strenuous efforts to recover their prosperity by hard work and rigorous self-denial. The same is true of other countries. Russia has a long leeway to make up. The south-east of Europe is overpopulated, and the masses are wretchedly poor. We were learning something of Japanese competition before the Japanese embarked on their foolish gamble for a great empire in the Far East.

It is difficult to guess how we shall deal with this problem. The loss of foreign trade will throw large numbers out of work. The action of the trade unions in restricting their membership will condemn great numbers to idleness. The shrinkage in the national income, by injuring our home trade, will make matters still worse. Inflation, the wiping out of all debts, would ruin the taxpayer and dry up the so-called "social services" without benefiting the workers. The withdrawal of a million or more young

men from labour to serve in a standing army, and the creation of employment by economically unnecessary public works is simply the shortest road to bankruptcy. In any case, the ambition of the wage-earners for still more favourable conditions can never be gratified. A gradual reduction of our population will be necessary. I wish I could think that our surplus population will be welcomed in any other part of the world.

The third cause of alarm is the language often used about "planning," a word which has become a commonplace in the mouths of Socialists. *Laissez-faire* is an abomination; we are to have a planned economy. Was Élie Halévy right when he said: "The Socialists believe in two things which are absolutely different and perhaps even contradictory: freedom and organisation"? This is going too far; we must have organisation, and some organisation must be the work of the government. Adam Smith, as is often forgotten, recognised that there may be industries which though of great public advantage are not lucrative, and that these may be subsidised by the government. But he thought that bureaucratic administration would be inefficient.

"The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capital would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be entrusted to no council and senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it."

No business can be built up without a great deal of planning, and very skilful planning, nor without a considerable amount of protective help from the laws. The function of the State used to be to provide a framework, within which the masters of industry could most efficiently provide the public with its various needs. The modern idea is that there should be a central direction according to a single plan. Indeed, the movement seems to be directed not against the abuses of competition, but against competition itself. Language is sometimes heard which suggests that there is something discreditable in business enterprise, and that profits earned by taking risks ought to be confiscated. But it is obvious that if all inducements to enterprise were withdrawn, and if success in business were looked upon as a disgrace, there would be a rapid decline in the national wealth. It is also plain that under a planned economy most commodities would be standardised, and the liberty of choice for the consumer would be very much curtailed. In these ways planning would certainly lead to a loss of freedom.

The fear which has brought into existence the flourishing Society of Individualists is well grounded. In almost all except the English-speaking nations Freedom has been either destroyed or is in jeopardy. Have we ceased to believe in it ourselves? If we have, we can no longer feel any pride in being Englishmen, for Freedom is our great gift to the world. "It is not to be thought of," says Wordsworth, "that we

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shall let it go.” I cannot believe it either. There is an earnest appeal to our countrymen at the end of the Austrian F. A. Hayek’s great book, *The Road to Serfdom*.<sup>1</sup> Those things which we are now told to regard as nineteenth-century illusions, as bourgeois ideals or as “Western” anachronisms, are moral and eternal values—“liberty and independence, truth and intellectual honesty, peace and democracy, and the respect for the individual as a man.”

“The virtues which are held less and less in esteem are precisely those on which the British people justly prided themselves, and in which they were generally recognised to excel.”

Independence and self-reliance, individual initiative and local responsibility, the successful reliance on voluntary activity, non-interference with one’s neighbour and tolerance of the different and queer, respect for custom and tradition, and a healthy suspicion of power and authority.

“Almost all the traditions and institutions in which British moral genius has found its most characteristic expression, and which in turn have moulded the national character and the whole moral climate of England, are those which the progress of collectivism and its inherently centralistic tendencies are progressively destroying.”

“It is one of the most disheartening spectacles of our time to see to what extent some of the most precious things which England has given to the world are now held in contempt in England itself. The English hardly know to what degree they differ from most other people in that they all, irrespective of party, hold to a greater or less extent the ideas which in their most pronounced form are known as Liberalism.”

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge and Sons.

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Fifty years ago almost all Englishmen were Liberals in this sense. Even to-day the travelling Englishman, if he finds an intellectual island where the tradition of Macaulay and Gladstone still lives, will find kindred spirits who talk the same language as himself. Our propaganda is fatuous, because our spokesmen have lost faith in their own ideals, and have no proper pride in what their country stands for. If we give up the ideal of the freedom and happiness of the individual, if we seem to think that our civilisation is not worth preserving, we have indeed nothing to offer. We need moral courage to say outright that we will have no truck with totalitarianism, because we believe that our own way of life is better. A spirit of defeatism and compromise will win us no respect.

Such is the protest of a foreign publicist who knows the state of western and central Europe. A rather more hopeful tone is sounded by another foreigner, of whom a friend of mine said that he would like to commit to him alone the whole terms of the peace-treaty—our former enemy and now trusted friend, Field-Marshal Smuts. Speaking in 1917, he said:

“Even the nations which have fought against it, like my own, must feel that their cultural interests, their language, their religion, are as safe under the British flag as those of the children of your own household and of your own blood. Therefore it seems to me that there is only one solution, and that is a solution supplied by your own past traditions—the traditions of freedom, self-government, and of the fullest development of all the constituent parts of the Empire.”

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We have been so often hurt by the ignorance, envy, and prejudice of foreign critics that it is tempting to quote the words of George Santayana, a Spanish North-American, who knew our country well during the First Great War.

“England is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, anomalies, hobbies and humours. The Englishman carries his English weather with him wherever he goes, and it becomes a cool spot in the desert, a steady and sane oracle among all the deliriums of mankind. Never since the heroic days of Greece has the world had such a sweet, just, boyish master. It will be a black day for the human race when scientific blackguards, conspirators, churls and fanatics manage to supplant him.”

I might quote other admiring appreciations of our national character from foreigners. Several of them recognise that our ideal is the character of the *gentleman*, a national product which has no exact equivalent elsewhere. It is worth while to emphasise this, for we now have an execrable group of snobs—the same who think it funny to sneer at a man’s pride and affection for his old school—who hate the word and all that it stands for, and not only for its adventitious association with heraldry and property in land, which has long been discarded. For example, G. K. Chesterton thought it a great compliment to Dickens (quite untrue by the way) to say that he could not draw a gentleman. I will choose as an example of a foreigner’s reaction Amiel’s thoughts after reading *John Halifax*. The gentleman, says Amiel, is—

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“a free and well-bred man, who is self-sufficient and knows how to make himself respected. He is something other than the man of good society, the decorous man, even the man of honour; manners, language, civility are not enough. In addition he must have independence and dignity. By any sort of vassalage or servility, still more a dishonourable act, one forfeits the title of gentleman. No man can command him in any way; when he obeys he obeys only what he recognises as just and equitable and not any despotism whatever.”

“The gentleman is the free man, who feels that personality is the essential fact, the intrinsic and real worth of the individual. Tell me what you are and I will tell you what you are worth.”

This is very much better than Newman’s famous and unsympathetic picture of a Protestant gentleman as looked at by a Catholic.

Santayana evidently fears that the “scientific blackguards” will soon be too strong for the Briton. The same opinion is found in Count Keyserling’s *Europe*,<sup>1</sup> a study of national character, a subject on which it is difficult to talk sense and easy to talk nonsense. His conclusion about England is:

“I am afraid from the historic point of view the English world which I have described here has gone the way of all flesh. But as a private possession it can survive for centuries. And this it should do. With all its faults it belongs among the finest products of the European world. And if it ultimately disappears from the picture as a temporal power, it will survive as a gene in the body of mankind, just as the Hellenic world of old has done. For in accordance with the law of non-recurrence which governs all life, the same perfection as the English will never occur again.”

<sup>1</sup> Count Hermann Keyserling, *Europe*, Jonathan Cape Ltd.

## THE TWILIGHT OF FREEDOM

The book of Professor Dibelius of Berlin on *England*<sup>1</sup> (1922) is an interesting and friendly study by a foreigner. I fear that at that date an equally impartial book on Germany could hardly have been published here. The following are some of the points in the concluding chapter, "England and the World." Until the nineteenth century the British State was like a mediaeval State, a mere bundle of private rights and duties. The reforms in that century created a new conception of the State, not, as everywhere else in Europe, based on absolutism, but a peculiar combination of democratic forms with the aristocratic spirit of the gentleman. Evolution without revolution is the great achievement of English history. Common sense is the central thread, one flower of which is the glorious gift of humour, from Chaucer to Dickens. England "developed the idea of the gentleman, and by this gave an ethical ideal of great though not unique value to the world." England gave birth to the modern idea of toleration. All this is mixed up with the strange notion that we are a domineering, aggressive people, who regard ourselves as the *Herrenvolk*. At that time the Germans could not make up their minds whether we wished to plant the Union Jack all over the world, or whether we were meekly preparing to retire to our island as a rather larger Holland.

Next to war and preparations for war, the greatest danger to Freedom comes from the penalisation of

<sup>1</sup> W. Dibelius, *England*, Jonathan Cape Ltd.

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the middle class, which has been virtually destroyed on the Continent and financially ruined here. Any process of levelling the population, by removing checks and balances, is fatal to Freedom. Spengler may have been right in predicting a return of the Caesars. But I have read so many prophecies which were entirely contradicted by the event, some of them by the most prominent statesmen and thinkers of their generation, that it is better to admit that the future is hidden from us. The outlook at present is depressing, but so it has been in several other periods of history. We have before now been in danger of losing our liberty, but the danger has been overcome. We must hope and pray that it may be overcome again.

V

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## V

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(1943)

“Wind time! Wolf time! There will come a year when no man on earth his brother man will spare.”—*Norse Edda*.

AMONG all the sorrows and anxieties of the present crisis in human affairs, none has caused so much consternation to thoughtful people as the open and scornful repudiation, by one of the most civilised nations of Europe, of all the moral principles, all the decent conventions, which for two thousand years have enabled human societies to live together in some degree of contentment and security. Almost all things which once seemed sacred and immutable have now become unsettled—truth and humanity, justice and reason. An apprehension of impending doom, of the break up of a great civilisation, has become general.

We have seen through the pathetic falsehood of the lay religion of the nineteenth century, the last Western heresy as the Catholics call it, the belief in an ineluctable law of progress, the faith in human perfectibility. This was a secularisation of the Christian hope of a blissful future life. It was the natural result of an age of unexampled advance in material comfort. The century of hope achieved

great things, partly because Providence, as Aeschylus says, had planted blind hopes in men's minds. But to throw our ideals into the future, as Bosanquet says, is the death of sane idealism, just as to leave our debts for the future to pay is the death of sane finance. The future is a convenient place to store our dreams and our obligations, but the future will honour neither of them.

But to surrender the law of progress is one thing; to deny the fact of progress is quite another. Are we not, in some ways, at least, better than our ancestors? Cruelty, which no pagan or Christian moralist included among the deadly sins, is for us the most detestable and unpardonable of crimes. Even a man who rejects the retributive theory of punishment would be wholesomely vindictive if he found a man torturing a child or even an animal. We may or may not be more chaste and more unselfish than our forefathers, but at least, we thought, we are more humane, and also less treacherous. For the sacredness of signed agreements was part of industrial civilisation.

And now we have seen in Germany the justification, almost the glorification of the character which Livy unfairly attributes to Hannibal—*inhumana crudelitas, perfidia plus quam Punica*. What is the meaning of it? "The coming of Antichrist" is no explanation. Is it possible that the atrocities have been exaggerated for propaganda purposes? We should like to think so, but it is impossible. In 1915 I asked

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Lord Bryce, who was chairman of a commission to report on the alleged cruelties in Belgium, whether they were really true. He replied gravely: "The Germans are doing things which have not been done in civilised warfare for centuries." In this war they have been ten times worse. The cold-blooded massacres of tens of thousands of avowedly innocent persons recall the worst exploits of Attila, Genghiz Khan, and Timur. The extermination of the Jews has not even the pitiful excuse of religious bigotry.

It is a phenomenon which we must try to understand. In the first place it is a local malady, which has not shown itself outside Germany, except in Russia and Spain, racked with revolution and civil war. There has been no revival of cruelty in the rest of Europe or in America.<sup>1</sup>

We may confine our attention to Germany, and ask whether ruthless brutality is an ingrained vice of the German character. On the whole, national character is a myth; we can hardly be too sceptical of this explanation. We have known Germans; we have visited their country; we have read their books. The average German, as we have known him, is a rather good-natured fellow, fond of eating and drinking and making a noise; very unpolitical, regarding politics as a dirty trade which does not interest him; very industrious and efficient; fond of working in a team, giving and receiving orders, and therefore unused to liberty. Many of their most

<sup>1</sup> I wrote this before the horrible crime of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

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esteemed writers loathe war, militarism, and tyranny; from Kant and Goethe to Eucken, Troeltsch, Harnack and Natorp their testimony is clear and strong. According to trustworthy evidence they went jubilantly into the war of 1914, but reluctantly into the war of 1939. Neville Chamberlain told me himself that the demonstration in favour of peace which greeted him at Munich exceeded all expectations. There is certainly a problem here. Has a German a dual personality, a Jekyll and a Hyde?

Germany is Nazism, and Nazism is Hitler. So the Germans tell the world. And what kind of man is Hitler? I think we must accept the very unfavourable portrait drawn by Germans like Haffner. "The Nazification of Germany signifies for Hitler a social career—the means by which a life that had gravitated from the petty bourgeoisie to the rabble suddenly ranked as an equal with the King of England." As a young man "he had sunk to the lowest position—a petty, despised police spy, poorly paid for the job." "Behold the man without family or friend or calling, the adult spiteful child whom no one loves or respects, but who still clings to the life of a hero out of opera. One day he will pay them all out—the organised workers and the Jews, the artists and the Austrian State." To Papen he said: "I am over forty; I must now rule." To the British Ambassador in August, 1939: "I would rather have the war now than when I am five or ten years older." He does not really care for the Nordic race,

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or for *Lebensraum*, or for Germany, but only for himself, for power, and revenge.

And this man is worshipped as a demigod by his subjects. Is this incredible? It is not. When a nation boils over, the mud always rises to the top. Robespierre, Barras, Rewbell, and the rest were not much better than the group of corrupt gangsters, seven of whom have smuggled out of Germany (a capital offence!) seven million pounds of stolen public money, besides vast sums which they keep in Germany for their enjoyment. They are efficient rascals, like their model the supremely competent Corsican brigand who plagued the world for nearly twenty years. There is nothing unexampled in the adoration of Hitler. Martial speaks of an *edictum domini deique nostri*. His lord and god was Domitian, whose reputation is no better than Hitler's. Popes before now have been equated with the Deity. "It is a little strong," said one of them, "but rather pleasant." Neville Chamberlain, on the other hand, said to H. A. L. Fisher: "Hitler is the blackest devil I have ever met," and this opinion is shared by Germans who are not intoxicated by collective mania.

How far are the German people really behind him? It is quite impossible to say. We may recall the words of Ugo Foscolo about Europe under Napoleon. "Napoleon's domination was like a July day in Egypt—all clear, brilliant and blazing; but all silent—not a voice heard, the stillness of the grave." The end came when Bonaparte, disguised

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as "Colonel Campbell," fled through Provence to escape being lynched. But while the terror lasts, the opposition is dumb. "Wise men," says Selden not very heroically, "say nothing in dangerous times."

Nevertheless, just as the French Revolution began in an atmosphere of idealism which appealed to many generous hearts, so Nazism rests on a philosophy, a theory of the State which did not begin with Hitler and will unfortunately survive him. The object of this paper is to consider this philosophy. The question may be raised whether the repudiation of parliamentary government and of all the ideas which collectively constituted what Fisher calls the Liberal experiment is necessarily connected with aggressive imperialism and blatant immoralism. The answer seems to be that the theory of the State which we have to examine demands that a nation shall be permanently on a war footing, and that this type of State is almost incompatible with liberty and decent behaviour. We are discovering with regret that in order to combat Fascism we are obliged to a large extent to fascise ourselves. Power politics and liberty can hardly exist together.

Thucydides in his third book gives a very brilliant description of the complete dissolution of all public and private morality during the Peloponnesian war. Such a moral chaos, he says, will always recur while human nature remains the same, if the same conditions are repeated in the course of history. These conditions were the existence of a number of small

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cantons always quarrelling among themselves, and internally split into two political factions. The same conditions were repeated in mediaeval Italy, and the same results followed. Machiavelli describes them with a cool cynicism which has made his name a byword. The world finds a difference between the restraint of Thucydides and the panegyric on Caesar Borgia. The combination of parochial nationalism and class warfare was fatal to Greece and almost fatal to Italy. On a much larger scale Europe seems bent on the same method of suicide. The outcome, as some good judges think, may be a knock-out blow by some strong Power which has succeeded in suppressing class warfare and has substituted world-conquest for parochial nationalism. This is what the philosophy of Nazism or Fascism claims, in principle, to have achieved. It offers the world peace—the peace of serfdom or of death, except for the ruling race, a *pax Germanica* like the *pax Romana* in the first two centuries of our era. It is one possible outcome of an intolerable situation, but, as will be argued in these pages, a quite intolerable and a very short-lived solution.

The deification of the State is one attempt to escape from the eternal antinomy of what is and what ought to be. It is to idealise the actual, or what the actual may become. This was not Plato's philosophy. Plato, a Christian before Christ, taught that our citizenship—our *politeuma* as St. Paul calls it—is in the city “whose type is laid up in heaven,”

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and only very conditionally in our earthly city. He was a Hildebrandian before Hildebrand, but not a Hegelian before Hegel. The Stoics contributed two doctrines of the greatest value—the supremacy of the individual conscience as against the State, and the law of nature which is the law of God. Conscience may err, and the limitations of natural rights are open to discussion; but the words of Antigone to Creon are the charter of freedom in its inviolable citadel. “I did not think that your decrees were of such force that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of God. For their life is not of to-day or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth.” Ultimate judgments of value admit of no compromise. If we are true to ourselves we must be true to them.

And yet the Stoa, and the Christian Church afterwards, were obliged to compromise. They were driven to admit that there is a relative as well as an absolute law of nature; mankind “in a state of sin” must tolerate acquisitiveness, criminal laws, even war. These accommodations were energetically repudiated by what Troeltsch calls the sect-type; but the Great Church had to come to terms with an imperfect world. Ethics became dualistic; the Church offered a pass degree, as well as an honours school for those who wished to be “perfect.” Augustine envisaged “two cities,” the city of God and the earthly State, the Roman empire, whose

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victories without justice were only great acts of brigandage. He did not mean to identify the city of God with the institutional Church, but papal ambition soon made the identification under his authority, and when the Vatican had won its triumph over the Hohenstauffens the Church became itself a *civitas terrena* of a very noxious type. It must not be forgotten that Germany and Italy were the chief sufferers from the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Church.

But there was another dualistic solution, the most ruinous of all. Christian ethics, it was held, are purely personal; the State is free from all moral obligations. This is the Fascist creed, but it is much older than Mussolini and Hitler.

The clash was bound to come as soon as the Church won its victory over the empire. What has the Church to say about war? It is not necessary to collect the proofs that Harnack was fully justified when he said: "The Gospel excludes all violence, and has nothing in common with war, nor will permit it." "Christian ethics rule out war absolutely." To argue that the teaching of Jesus was dependent on the limitations of his historical outlook is to deprive it of all permanent value. "The influence of eschatology on the ethics of the Gospel, especially on the Sermon on the Mount," says Windisch very honestly, "is not so great as I formerly supposed."

We need not discuss the very difficult problem

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here raised as to whether a Christian ought to be unconditionally a pacifist. It was plain to all that States do not act on Christian principles. Bacon thought that "we are much beholden to Machiavelli and others that write what men do, and not what they ought to do." This may be doubted. The good man tries to practise what he preaches; to preach what we or others practise is shamelessness rather than candour. Diderot thought that part of *The Prince* ought to be headed, "The circumstances in which a prince ought to be a scoundrel." "If we had done for ourselves what we have done for Italy," said Cavour, "what scoundrels we should be." But the influence of Machiavelli is very perceptible in Bacon and in Hobbes; nor should we forget the glorification of conquest in Marvell's famous Ode, when Britain was for a few years the first military Power in Europe.

Luther makes it his boast that "the temporal sword and the secular authorities have never been so highly extolled as by me." He needed the protection of the German princes, and he made this shameful and disastrous accommodation, which has poisoned German Protestantism from that day to this. The entire outward life of the Christian is in submission to the State; inwardly he obeys the Sermon on the Mount. "The hand that bears the sword of government is no longer man's hand but God's. Not man it is, but God, who hangs, breaks on the wheel, beheads, strangles, and wages war."

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This is a radical dualism, transferred to the motives of action in every individual, an utterly impossible cleavage. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” The double heart makes the double head, as one of the Cambridge Platonists says. Calvin believed in the possibility of a “Christian State,” and his followers have been less submissive to authority than the Lutherans. But his ethics were distorted by frequent appeals to the Old Testament, and he offered no real protest against State-worship. Appeals to Christian principles were also compromised by the obvious fact that “reasons of Church” had sanctioned as many enormities as “reasons of State.”

Frederick the Great was an apt disciple of Machiavelli, never more so than when he thought of writing a treatise against *The Prince*. Voltaire saw through him at once. “Sir,” he said, “the first advice that Machiavelli would have given to a disciple would have been that he should begin by writing a refutation of his book.” Carlyle, unfortunately, was less acute; a transcendentalist is never quite secure against immoralism. Machiavelli’s disciples have in point of fact been more logical and shameless than the satanic Florentine himself. Even Alexander I in one of his moods said to Talleyrand, who must have smiled inwardly, “you talk to me of public law, which means nothing to me. What do you suppose that your parchments and treaties

signify to me?" The terrible Manicheism of human history has come into full light. It is a strife in which Ahriman is usually the conqueror. "Machiavelli," says Acton, "is not a vanishing type, but a constant influence."

That Lutheranism is still infected is shown by the influential moralist and preacher Naumann, who found "this dualism in our consciousness—not one God but two—a riddle and a grief," but accepted it without reservation.

Hegel and Fichte, who, it must be remembered, lived at a time when their country was suffering deep humiliation at the hands of the bandit whom the Nazis regard as a hero and a model, are often regarded as the chief philosophical villains. Hegel's achievement was to insert Machiavellianism into the context of an idealist philosophy which included all the values of ethics. This was to legitimise a bastard. Reasons of State now received a quasi-religious benediction. "What is real is rational." He did not mean that might is always right, but that right is might. So did Carlyle, but it is not true. The mills of God grind too slowly for this assumption to have any practical value. Even the Jews learned this lesson at last.

Fichte's frenzied patriotism may be summed up in the American Stephen Decatur's aphorism, "My country, right or wrong," a saying often ascribed to some Englishman. The morality of the Sermon on the Mount, he says, must inspire the patriot with

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“deep repugnance.” Yet Fichte never thought of stigmatising freedom as a “bourgeois superstition.” He is only convinced that civilisation stands or falls with Germany, and that Napoleon is a devil. And somehow or other he can still say that “the honourable man has no country upon earth, but seeks his citizenship in heaven.” A philosopher is sometimes at his best when he contradicts himself, and unless he is a mystic he dates himself, as Fichte certainly did.

But it is the worst side of the German idealists which has lived. “In opposition to all utopians,” said a German writer in 1915, “we may, with Fichte, Hegel, and Moltke, praise war as the awakener of moral strength.” “Might,” says Bernhardi, “is the highest right, and the question of right is settled by the dynamometer war, which always decides biologically with justice.” There is no more idealism here. In spite of Socrates, Thrasymachus remains unrefuted. It has at last become transparently clear that *Realpolitik* and Christianity are fundamentally antagonistic, and the latest apostles of State-worship have spued Christianity out of their mouths. The issue is thus clarified.

Our own thinkers have not been immune to the German virus. Not to speak again of Carlyle, moralists like McDougall and metaphysicians like Bosanquet have either accepted the Lutheran dualism, or have idealised the State in the manner of Hegel. “The State,” says Bosanquet, “is the

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guardian of our whole moral world. It is hard to see how the State can commit theft or murder in the sense in which these are moral offences.” After reading some of their utterances, we can sympathise with the indignation which led McTaggart to make the following perhaps indefensible protest: “Compared with worship of the State, zoolatry is rational and dignified. A bull or a crocodile may not have great intrinsic value, but it has some, for it is a conscious being. The State has none.”

The genesis of Fascism has been briefly traced. It is now, as has been said, a philosophy. As such, what appeal does it make to our generation?

The biological doctrine of the survival of the fittest may be interpreted to mean that power is the true aim of human endeavour. “We dined as a rule on each other. What matter? the toughest survived.” The fact that Nature has exterminated the huge diplodocus and the stately mastodon, while preserving the bug and the louse, is not very promising for the great blond beast, but the will to power may make use of technical intelligence. Fascism, says Mussolini, rejects the materialistic conception of happiness, which belongs to utilitarianism and economism, bourgeois or, as they now say, philistine notions. Like the mystagogue in Lucian, the Fascists cry, “Get out, Epicureans; get out, Christians!” The “absurd doctrines” of political equality and majority rule are rejected with contempt. The General Will

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(Rousseau's phrase) is to be ascertained not by counting heads, but by consulting those in power. "Justice and Hitler's will are the same thing." The prevalent anti-intellectualism is accepted with alacrity. We should not think; we should will and act. The individual has no value or meaning in himself, and therefore he should have no liberty, least of all any liberty of conscience. Christianity, as Nietzsche taught, is an organised conspiracy of the weak against the strong. It would prevent superior races, such as the German and Japanese, from realising their destiny to conquer the world. "The expansion of the nation," says Mussolini, "is an essential manifestation of vitality." The primary duty of women is to produce soldiers, and any man who has not taken part in this duty must give a valid excuse if he wishes to be employed by the State. No independent organised groups can be tolerated. Trade unions must go; and ultimately a war with the Catholic Church cannot be avoided. Even aesthetics must be enslaved. "So long as there remains in Germany any non-political art," said Goebbels, "our task is not ended." Fascist education follows the method favoured by Newman, "Pour truth into the child's mind and then seal it up in perpetuity."

This system might be described as barbarised Platonism or as barbarised Jesuitism, but to do so would be a great injustice to both. It is rather an organised worship of Moloch, based on a perverted

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romanticism, which when it is corrupted always becomes obscene and sadistic.

That the theory of State absolutism, carrying with it the promise of the abolition of class warfare and of individual acquisitiveness, makes a strong appeal to many generous minds among the young, has been proved by results. Even the fantastic racialist theory, ridiculed by all competent ethnologists, has been swallowed readily and made the excuse for unexampled cruelties. It may also for a short time have a most formidable survival value, comparable to the irresistible force of the mounted Altaic nomads in the Dark and Middle Ages, which wrecked civilisation over a great part of the old world. But it suffers from internal contradictions, some of which go down to the roots of human nature, which make its early break-up inevitable.

In the first place, there is no reason why the State should be chosen as the sole object of loyalty. We all belong to several different groups, some narrower, some broader than the State. Such are the family, the locality, the trade or profession, the Church, the whole comity of civilised nations, humanity itself. Each of these has a limited but definite claim upon our loyalty. St. Peter's words, "Honour all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the king," embody a much truer philosophy than State absolutism.

The State is neither a person nor an organism; it is only an organisation. The General Will is a

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figment, a stick for the backs of minorities; there is no will apart from the wills of individual citizens.

When the ethics of violence become the publicly acknowledged philosophy of the whole society, it is inevitable that other groups, which have as good a right to recognition as the State, will adapt the theory to their own ends. If moral considerations do not apply to group action, any rebellion may justify itself. The disintegrating effects of the dissolution of ethical principles and traditions were proved in ancient Greece and mediaeval Italy. They will certainly be proved again.

Another obvious objection is that if one State is exalted above right and wrong, so that no falsehood, no cruelty, no tyranny, can involve it in guilt, the same privilege belongs to all other States. Practically, the totalitarian State holds that no faith need be kept with foreigners, as the Catholic Church has been known to argue that no faith need be kept with heretics. But where there is no obligation of honour, there can be no trust or confidence. *Regna regnis lupi*. Fascists maintain that such obligations hold only between equals, and that other nations are only fit to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the master race. Apart from the fact that such claims are purely ridiculous, State absolutism could only subsist when there was but one master race. We may leave Italy out of account, since the romantic dream of restoring the Mediterranean empire of Rome is altogether out of relation to the

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facts. The modern Italians are not a conquering race. But the utterances of Japanese militarists are as extravagant as anything that could be quoted from German chauvinists. There is not room on one planet for two nations impelled by biological necessity to unlimited expansion.

There never was a time when the love of independence was so strong as it is to-day. The tendency during the last hundred years has not been towards the coalescence of small nations into great empires, but towards a fissiparous breaking up of composite nations into their component parts. The exceptions have been in Germany and Italy, where there had already been a racial unity prevented by peculiar circumstances. The analogy between modern conditions and Napoleon's empire here breaks down, though even the French attempt failed because it aroused dormant antagonisms to foreign interference. The French Revolution offered, and for a time and in places gave, better conditions—more "liberty, equality and fraternity"—to the peoples of the Continent than they had previously enjoyed. Germany has nothing of the kind to give, and the hatred aroused by her aggressions probably exceeds any felt before against any nation. It does not seem possible that a settlement of Europe can be reached by a universal empire established by force.

Bishop Henson in his Gifford Lectures thinks that no other nation hates war as we do, and that therefore our pacifism will meet with no response. It is

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no doubt true that till 1939 France and England had good reasons, apart from moral repugnance, for hating war and seeking peace as long as it was possible. Both had everything to lose and nothing to gain. But I question whether the majority in any country, even in Germany, regard war as anything but a curse. The masses everywhere are quite unmoved by a policy of aggressive imperialism. The romance and chivalry of war have almost disappeared; only the horrors remain. It is hardly credible that any nation will long favour a policy of wanton aggression, at the cost of remaining armed to the teeth, and being the object of universal detestation.

The idols of the nineteenth century, our special contribution to civilisation, are no doubt discredited, though Liberalism would revive if the danger of war were removed. But the repudiation of the absolute values, Love or Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, is a very different thing. These intrinsic values, in which, as theists believe, the nature and mind of God are revealed to us, stand in their own right, and cannot be treated as means to anything else. Men who will not be martyrs for their interests will face death for their convictions. A tyranny which invades and dethrones personality in its citadel, the soul and conscience, can no more stifle resistance than the persecutions could destroy nascent Christianity.

The claims which the totalitarian State makes

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upon the individual are monstrous, and quite intolerable, except as a war-measure. It follows that when Germany is no longer on a war footing, as the result either of victory or defeat, the pressure will be relaxed, and freedom will again lift up her head. And freedom, when the common people are allowed to speak, will not favour brutal aggression.

Lastly, the question may be raised whether the nation State is likely to be the final form of human organisation. The determination of national frontiers has been something of a historical accident. A European war is as much a civil war as the wars between Athens and Sparta, or between Florence and Milan. There have been times when the upper classes in the different nations fraternised naturally, as English and Hungarian nobles still do. It was thought till comparatively lately that the community of interest between the labouring classes all over Europe might prevent the outbreak of war. It is mainly fear that keeps the nations apart, though none of them would willingly surrender its complete internal independence.

No solution is yet in sight of a problem which threatens the very existence of civilisation. The present international anarchy is quite intolerable. An effective League of Nations to prevent war is not out of the question; but as long as some nations think that the balance of power is changing in their favour, they will resist any attempt to stabilise present conditions. The subjection of Europe by a

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wolf State would be very short-lived, and the hatreds which it would arouse would sooner or later have dreadful consequences. The words of Christ that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword have on the whole been confirmed by history. Over all the efficient brutalities of the Fascist Powers hover the fetid fumes of a stale romanticism. As a political philosophy, Fascism claims to be the herald of a new order; but its methods are purely destructive, and its aims absolutely vague.

(1947)

The foregoing, which was written in 1943, when the war was still raging, is reprinted from *Philosophy* in its original form, except that two or three references to Italy, and a few sentences repeated in later chapters, have been omitted. The Italian people were never captivated by Mussolini's imperialism. But now that the war is over we ought to remember Spinoza's admonition, that the wise man tries not to praise or blame, but to understand. The record of the German wolf State is atrocious, but unless we believe that persons who have had the misfortune to be born between the Rhine and the Vistula have a double dose of original sin, it must be possible to account for such strange conduct on the part of one of the chief European nations.

The first thing to remember is that Germany was in a state of revolution. The writings of Rauschning

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and other representative Germans make it clear that the nation was acutely conscious of what Keyserling called "*La Révolution Mondiale*." Hitler would pass, but the revolution would not. We shall therefore understand Nazism better if we consider it against the background of revolutionary psychology.

One common blunder must be corrected at once. It is often said that Nazism was a revolution of the Right, Bolshevism of the Left. The two are birds of a feather. Both were revolts not against autocracy but against Liberal Democracy. The Germans did not revolt against the Hohenzollerns, who had departed fourteen years before, nor the Russians against the Romanoffs. Nicholas II had abdicated, and was murdered with his family. Bolshevism borrowed its philosophy from the German Marx, Nazism its methods from the Russian Lenin. Therefore in considering the psychology of revolution it will be better not to confine ourselves to Germany alone, but to bear in mind similar outbreaks in other countries.

The French Revolution, 1789 to 1795, caused more excitement and alarm in Europe than the first epidemic of cholera. It was a new disease, and nobody knew how far it would spread. We have now learned that revolutions never last more than a few years, and that after a short career of destructiveness they give way to sharp reactions, in which nevertheless some things that have been destroyed

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are not restored. The early propagandists of revolution are idealists and fanatics: before long "the revolution devours its own children." The Bolshevik leaders are dead, with bullets in their skulls. The English revolution, miscalled the Great Rebellion (the so-called revolution of 1688 was a rebellion, not a revolution), was followed by the Restoration. Russian Communism survives only for export; the Soviet police State is State capitalism. Berdyaeff has even said, "Russia is becoming a bourgeois society for the first time." Hitler suppressed the Brown Shirts, who brought him into power, and came to depend more and more on the regular Army.

Revolution is actually a social epidemic, a contagious psychosis with no obvious foundation. There are many crowd movements which we are unable to explain, since possession by good or evil spirits is now considered unscientific.

Some explanations are demonstrably false. The French Revolution was not "bourgeois," though it was followed by middle-class government after the episode of Napoleon. Nor was it caused by the misery of the poor. France was the richest country in Europe, and nearly one-third of the soil had passed into the possession of the cultivators. Rousseau, sentimental as he was, says nothing about the starvation of the peasantry, and Arthur Young is not nearly so condemnatory as those who have not read him suppose. Dr. Rigby, who visited

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France in the summer of 1789, was a practical agriculturist. He wrote:

“There was not a single acre but what was in a state of highest cultivation. The crops are beyond any conception I could have had of them, tens of thousands of acres of wheat superior to any which can be produced in England. Everything we see bears the marks of industry, and all the people look happy. What strikes me most is the wonderful difference between this country and England. The difference seems to be in favour of the former; if they are not happy they look at least very like it.”

He found in Germany just the stage of things which he had expected to find in France—oppression, dejection, filth, misery. Rigby’s testimony is not uncorroborated. There were many abuses, no doubt, which led to the bankruptcy of the Government, but the *culbute générale* was not caused by misery. Revolutions always occur in a rising market; they are the result of aspiration, not desperation. “Nothing in politics,” said John Morley, “is so intractable as a band of zealots, conscious that they are in a minority, yet armed by accident with the powers of a majority.”

The connection of revolutions with romanticism has often been recognised. Revolutionary philosophies, with their contempt for reason and their strange ruthlessness, are the sociological manifestation of the romantic movement. There is the same revolt against discipline, the same unbridled emotionalism, the same tendency to substitute for truth what one wishes to believe. Both are melodramatic,

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and ready to idealise classes and persons uncritically. From this love of uncriticised judgments comes the furious hatred which is a feature of all revolutions. Anatole France says: "If you begin by thinking that human beings are naturally good, you will end by wishing to kill all those who do not agree with you." F. L. Lucas says acutely that romanticism is a revolt of the submerged population *of the mind*.

From another point of view, it is plain that revolutions occur when the normal cohesion of societies breaks down, and when the Government is too weak to resist a faction which attempts to seize power in defiance of authority. There never has been a rising of a whole people. Revolutions are generally preluded by a spirit of defeatism in the governing class, a loss of nerve encouraged by subversive propaganda. Civilisation always throws up a number of the uncivilisable, congenital savages, degenerates and neurotics. The criminal class has its opportunity while the revolutionary fever is at its height. But the leaders are almost always young men, sometimes risen from the ranks, like Hitler and Mussolini, but more often from the middle class, like the French terrorists and Marx and Lenin. They are not always in any way above the average. Carnot, the Trotsky of the Terror, was the only able man in the French Revolution; Hitler, by common consent, was a man of repulsive character, and his chief supporters were no better. Max Nordau says:

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"A mattoid or half fool, who is full of organic feelings of dislike, generalises his subjective state into a system of pessimism. Another, in whom a lawless egoism dominates all thought and feeling, organises his anti-social instincts with a theory of anarchism. A third, who suffers from moral insensibility, so that no bond of sympathy unites him with his fellows, and who is poisoned by vanity amounting to megalomania, preaches a doctrine of the superman bound by no moral principle."

It would not be worth while to quote the maniacal ravings of Proudhon, Bakunin, and others. But those who like to ascribe the atrocities of the Germans to something in their national character may find confirmation in the astonishing prediction of Heine, written in 1834:

"There will appear men who will mercilessly uproot with sword and axe the soil of our European life in order to extirpate the last roots of the past. There will awake that old joy of battle which we find in the ancient Germans. There will break forth again the ferocity of the old combatants. The old gods will arise and wipe from their eyes the dust of a thousand years, and at last Thor with his hammer will shatter the Gothic cathedrals. . . . Come it will, and when you hear a crash such as has never been heard before, know that the German thunderbolt has fallen. . . . Take heed, men of France. You have more to fear from a freed Germany than from the entire Holy Alliance."

Men of letters see farther than politicians. Matthew Arnold and George Meredith saw the German peril; Dilke named the great Powers of the future and did not mention Germany.

One of the most remarkable forecasts was made by Engels in 1888.

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“In Germany no war is possible other than a world-war of undreamed of expansion and violence. Eight or ten million soldiers will annihilate each other. The devastation of the Thirty Years War will be crowded into three or four years and spread over the entire continent. There will be famine and pestilence, chaos in commerce, industry and credit, and in the end general bankruptcy. The old States will collapse; crowns will roll in the dust and there will be none to pick them up.”

Now that the German menace is over, we may have too much reason to remember another vision of a great man of letters. Amiel wrote in 1856:

“What terrible masters would the Russians be if ever they should spread the night of their rule over the southern countries! A polar despotism, or tyranny such as the world has not yet known, silent as the darkness, keen as ice, unfeeling as bronze, a slavery without compensation or relief; this is what they would bring us.”

But I do not believe in the permanence of national qualities. The Scandinavians, who at one time were the terror of Europe, are now the most pacific of nations. The Tartars are quiet agriculturists. If our countrymen were ever “weary Titans, with labour-dimmed eyes staggering on to their goal,” they are not much like that now. Amiel at the same date in 1856 thought that “the realm of Germany is beyond the clouds.” We thought so too at that time, though our philosophers had read Hegel.

Both in 1914 and in 1939 we went to war, as we have done several times in the past, to restore the balance of power in Europe. Our sympathy with oppressed nationalities was genuine, but we did not

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fight for Serbians, Poles, or Belgians. It is a question of academic interest, not easy to answer, whether Hitler had any hostile designs against this country. In *Mein Kampf* he makes no concealment of his plans of conquest in the east, but apparently he wishes to be at peace with us. Hitler never had any prejudice against telling lies, as he is careful to inform us; but my impression of *Mein Kampf* is that it is a stupidly honest book. A crafty diplomatist, a Metternich, a Cavour, a Bismarck, does not blatantly profess himself a disciple of Machiavelli, for whom treaties are only scraps of paper. John Gunther, writing as late as 1935, says that friendship with England is one of the cornerstones of Hitler's policy. Captain Liddell Hart, in a recent conversation with German generals, found that the Army chiefs wished to invade England after Dunkirk, but Hitler forbade it, because he had no wish to destroy England. This may not have been the real reason. Expert opinion in Germany was divided; one school thought that an invasion of England would be a very dangerous operation. But there is no doubt that the main preoccupation of Germany in both wars was to settle the old quarrel between Teuton and Slav. Hitler reminded his countrymen of the immense natural wealth of Russia in the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the Urals. "If all this were ours, there would be no poverty in Germany." Rauschning's *Makers of Destruction*<sup>1</sup> is

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Rauschning, *Makers of Destruction*, Eyre and Spottiswoode.

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very instructive as to German opinions about Russia. An unnamed officer said:

“Our task lies in the East. We can always come to terms with Britain, and France is no longer a problem; but war with Russia is inevitable. A giant Power is coming into existence such as the world has never known. In a few years they will be in a position to swarm all over Europe. When that day comes, God have mercy upon us. I cannot imagine that Western politicians will be so afraid of German hegemony that they will prefer to see an Asiatic tyranny from the Behring Sea to the Atlantic.”

Rosenberg said: “If Russia is allowed to consolidate her strength, no coalition in Europe can withstand her. Bolshevism is only the cover for a new aggressive Russian nationalism. Germany’s only dangerous enemy is Russia.” Röchling said: “The only enemy we need take seriously is Russia. We must liquidate her power before she liquidates us.” Can anyone say that these opinions were mistaken? There are two emotions which lead to war—fear and greed. Both were present in Germany, and fear at any rate was well founded. A few Germans, including Ribbentrop, wished to make a deal with Russia and destroy Britain, but the other policy was predominant. The peace of Brest-Litovsk showed for what high stakes Germany was playing in the East. A duel to the death between Teuton and Slav was inevitable. Were we obliged to help the Slav? Our rulers thought we were, and it is not for obscure persons like myself to say that they were mistaken.

German preparations for a total war necessarily

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included aggression upon their neighbours. They considered Austria an integral part of Germany, and they could not allow Czecho-Slovakia to project as a dangerous salient into the heart of the enlarged Reich. Other annexations had an economic purpose, to enable Germany to withstand if necessary a thirty years' blockade. It was also the amiable purpose of the Nazis to concentrate industrialism in the Reich, while "the lesser breeds without the law" acted as hewers of wood and drawers of water in producing raw materials. Further, some imports were necessary, which could only be paid for by exported goods, which the foreigner must be obliged to take. Aspirin and mouth-organs in fantastic quantities were unloaded in South-eastern Europe.

On the whole it seems that a combination of circumstances, each intelligible in itself, has led Germany into the orgy of crime which has outraged the conscience of the world. There was the bad tradition, four hundred years old and sanctioned by Lutheranism, the dominant religion, that the State can do no wrong. There was a certain hardness in the Prussian character. There was a glorification of war, connected with the social prestige of the officer class. There was the memory of successful wars against Denmark, Austria, and France. There was the feeling that Germany, so slow in achieving unity, had been too late for the partition of lands outside Europe, in which Britain and France had

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won all the prizes. They knew that we wanted peace, but they compared us to a gambler who, having won a large stake, proposes to play for love for the rest of the evening. There was the restless ambition of a parvenu nation, rightly conscious of all the qualities which lead to wealth and power. And behind all this was the lurking fear that they had after all, as was vulgarly said, "missed the bus," that the course of empire was moving still further east, and that their position as a Great Power was in serious danger. They have always been poor psychologists; as Lord Haldane told me, they have never understood or known how to deal with other nations. They know only how to command and to obey; compromise, which is second nature in democracies, is foreign to their make-up. But they do understand duty and discipline, they are, as a nation, incorruptible; no nation is more industrious or more intelligent. The time may come when we shall be glad to see a strong Germany, the Germany that produced Kant, Goethe and Schiller, Ranke and Mommsen, the great musicians and the great scientists. These names will live when Hitler and his gang are forgotten.



VI  
ESCAPISM



## VI

### ESCAPISM

THERE are times when we are so much in harmony with our surroundings that we are content to bask in the sunshine and to say to the passing hour, like Faust, "Stay with us; you are so fair." There have been times when whole nations, or the most vocal part of them, have believed themselves to be living in a world which, if not the best of all possible worlds, is an abode from which they have no desire to escape. They are being challenged, for, as Walt Whitman says, "It is provided in the essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary." But the challenge is unheeded, and the price is demanded later. *Ubi nil timetur, quod timeatur nascitur.*

But neither individuals nor societies are content for long. Most of us, though we are bidden to look forward to an eternity of calm fruition, cannot spend an evening without trying to escape from a gentleman whom we know slightly and find, it seems, an intolerable bore—ourselves. There are various expedients—crossword puzzles, detective novels, day-dreaming, aimless chatter, card-playing, alcohol, or other drugs. Work is an anodyne for many; religion for some.

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The effect of boredom on a large scale in history is underestimated. It is a main cause of revolutions, and would soon bring to an end all the static Utopias and the farmyard civilisation of the Fabians. Boredom often generates wars, the supreme exhibition of human folly and wickedness. The criminals who arrange them have studied the minds of the masses who vote for them and of the young men who will joyfully and gallantly die in them. Wars are not boring.

When pessimism attacks an individual, so that the passionate desire for a final escape dominates the natural instinct of self-preservation, he may take refuge in suicide. It is an example of the strange conservatism of our institutions that in Great Britain, almost alone among civilised nations, suicide is still a felony, and attempted suicide a crime. The unsuccessful but widely supported agitation for legalising euthanasia showed that public opinion is changing on this question. The civilised world will no doubt come to the conclusion that so far as the State is concerned a man has a right to declare his innings closed whenever he chooses, and that though the occasions are few indeed when a brave and good man, in possession of his faculties, will choose this way of escape, there are exceptional cases when no obstacle should be put in the way of anticipating an inevitable and cruel end of an incurable and painful disease.

In this chapter I wish to consider neither the petty

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manifestations of boredom in our daily lives, nor the tragic effects of despair and misery in revolution, suicide, and depopulation. I wish to consider the various forms of escapism as they have shown themselves in philosophy and religion. It is plain that the desire for deliverance from the ills of life has been one of the determining factors in both these fields.

There are five ways in which a man may react against acute dissatisfaction with things as they are. He may direct his thoughts to a real or imagined happier state in the past. He may direct his thoughts to an imagined happier state in the future. He may turn his back on the outer world and seek salvation in the contemplation of an inner world of unchangeable and blessed stability. He may try to correct his own want of faith, his spiritual myopia, in the hope that his transfigured self may find even in the external world a happier and truer picture than he could discern before he submitted himself to the discipline of religion and philosophy. Or lastly, in a more aggressive mood, he may accept provisionally, as true under the conditions of finite existence, the metaphysical dualism which is and must be the working faith of the moralist, and advance strenuously to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. These five are in practice by no means mutually exclusive. The third, the method of detachment, may find its fulfilment in a return to social activities, and the fifth may transcend dualism

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by faith in the supremacy of the absolute values. I will consider the four first in turn; the reaction of the moralist is hardly a form of escape.

*Archaism* is partly a retreat into a dream-world—this is the essence of romanticism, and partly an attempt to find guidance and inspiration in the records of our ancestors, who “had more wit and wisdom than we.” The contemplation of happier ages in the past is consoling, apart from the presumption which it offers that the “sorrowful weary wheel” may bring back the age of gold which it traversed in part of its revolution. *Nostrum est quod praeteriit temporis.* Nothing can rob us of the happiness which we once enjoyed.

“The old is better” is the voice of authority, that reverence for tradition which, for good and evil, has made religion the most potent of antiseptics.

Priests have used stone knives long after iron has been discovered. Plutarch’s father, arguing like Bishop Blougram, begged his son to be content with the “old faith,” which cannot be pulled to pieces with impunity. “The faith once delivered to the saints” became petrified—not yet Petrified—only three generations after it was first proclaimed. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* is an impressive slogan, even if a closer investigation reveals that the first clause means “in 1563,” the second “at Trent,” the third “by a majority.”

There is a charm about anything old. It is pleasant to swim against the stream, instead of being carried

down with it. Romanticism such as that of Horace Walpole has now fallen into discredit; but how many of us still prefer an Elizabethan manor-house, replete with every ancient discomfort, to a modern labour-saving villa!

But human nature being what it is, archaism is not merely a city of refuge for a dreamer. From it come all the revivals. Revivals are shallow things, since they aim at reproducing what never existed or what has perished with the age which gave it birth. In so far as they try to preserve continuity, and to rescue from extinction values which are in danger of being lost, they are not really archaic. Such were the great movements which we call collectively the Renaissance, which has governed European culture down to our own day. Nor can we find fault with the reverence paid in our higher education to classical models, some of which approached perfection in their own line.

But it is in a disintegrating society that the anxiety to revive the past is most apparent, and too often it takes the form of primitivism, since the tastes of the recent past seem to be discredited. We have lost nearly the whole of Greek literature in the second and third centuries before Christ, because the restorers of pure Attic disliked the style in which it was written. Paganism was dying in euthanasia in the third century A.D., but it was resuscitated archaistically, so that Augustine, instead of dealing with the syncretistic religion of the cultivated

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pagans of his day, thinks it worth while to ridicule the old Roman godlings of Varro. The Catholic revival under Chateaubriand and de Maistre was almost equally shallow. In art the reversion to savage models seems to me purely pathological.

In secular history romantic archaism has been disastrous. The ruin of the East Roman Empire is, in no small measure, traceable to Justinian's senseless wars, which were waged to revive the Empire of Augustus. Henry V's claim to the French crown led to the ruin of the Plantagenets and the old nobility. Two obsolete institutions, the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Church as a territorial Power, obstructed for centuries the unification of Germany and Italy. The historian must not lose sight of the ghosts which hover over our modern world.

At the time when I am writing,<sup>1</sup> these ghosts threaten to wreck the civilisation of Europe. Even Mussolini's grotesque charade in the robes of Caesar is causing great inconvenience, and Germany has revived Napoleonism in its most dangerous and destructive form. A curious archaic superstition has taken possession of the German nation, and has become a popular religion. A popular religion is a superstition which has enslaved a philosophy. The postulates in this case are that German has been spoken, *ab initio*, by a blonde and blue-eyed race, that this race is autochthonous in northern Europe, and that the region, the race,

<sup>1</sup> In 1940.

and the language are all uniquely noble. Professor Hauer exhorts his countrymen to "return to the paganism in which our Teutonic forefathers found happiness before they were captivated by an alien Judaistic superstition and an alien Romance culture." So, as F. L. Lucas says, "A few hysterical sentences about Nordic heroism and Aryan purity suffice to build up a whole dream-world, in which a Hitler youth seems to himself a very Galahad as he spits on defenceless Jews."

Of all the ways of escape which we have to consider, archaism is the least fruitful and the most dangerous.

*Futurism* is now more important in religion and philosophy than archaism, but it has not always been so. In classical antiquity, in spite of the popular cults of the spirits of the dead, it played only a small part, except in the Orphic brotherhoods, to which Platonism was affiliated. The earlier Hebrew religion had no eschatology. The shadowy Sheol was outside Yahveh's jurisdiction. The Jewish view of the future was less a wishful optimism than a resolute conviction that divine justice, in reward and punishment, must somehow and somewhen be done on earth—of the chosen people a remnant, but perhaps only a remnant, would be saved. But as the prospects of the nation became darker, apocalypticism succeeded prophecy, and men's thoughts turned to a supernatural deliverance, a day of the Lord. The

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Christian Church succeeded to a mixed inheritance of Hellenistic thought, mainly Platonic and Stoic but with an infusion of Oriental cults and of the Judaism of the dispersion, already influenced by Greek ideas. It was futuristic in its eschatology, which was supramundane, though a sporadic Chiliasm broke out at intervals without exercising an abiding influence. The doctrine of the Church crystallised at one of the most dismal periods of history, at the beginning of a long dark age which continued for some six hundred years, and there was nothing either in patristic theology or in Neoplatonic philosophy to encourage the idea that men might escape in thought from a distressful present to a brilliant revival of culture and prosperity in the near future. The general opinion was that the world had grown old and was near its end. The last scene was looked forward to without regret.

But supramundane futurism was firmly rooted in the popular mind. It was a way of escape, but not wholly a consolatory one, for it was commonly taught that the lost would far outnumber the saved and that the fate of the lost would be inconceivably terrible. The colours were heightened because the picture tended to fade. Eschatology is always symbolic, and the Christian teaching tried to combine two doctrines which were really incompatible, the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the body and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. But

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however eternal life was conceived, heaven and hell were treated as places, and the time of divine reward and punishment was in the future.

It was not till the eighteenth century that futurism was secularised. The story of the superstition of human perfectibility has been often told, for example in my Romanes Lecture and in J. B. Bury's *The Idea of Progress*,<sup>1</sup> which appeared about the same time. It would not be worth while now to illustrate by quotations the extravagant predictions which fill the writings of the last century, predictions which were made by historians, publicists, and men of science, not excluding Darwin himself. Bradley protested in vain against a belief which, as he said, has his sympathy, but which he certainly cannot share. It was popularly assumed that the doctrine of evolution supported the supposed law of progress, although it should have been plain that Darwin's theory only explained how those types which were best suited to their environment survived, not that nature in any sense favoured the "higher" members of a species. Darwin himself never claimed to have discovered the cause of variations, the large majority of which are deleterious or lethal. Moreover, the distinction already drawn by Kant between "evolution," the mechanical unpacking of what was present in germ from the beginning, and "epigenesis," which involves the addition of new factors, was often forgotten, and it must be admitted

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, Macmillan.

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that Lloyd Morgan's word "emergence" was admirably chosen to mask the confusion between two radically different theories. Several physiologists have said that the mechanism of nature, for example in the structure of the eye, is by no means so ingenious as Paley believed. They have agreed with Alfonso the Wise, of Spain, who remarked that he could have suggested improvements in the universe if the Creator had consulted him. A violent thunder-storm deterred him from placing his suggestions on record.

The superstition was dying before public affairs gave it its *coup de grâce*. But strange survivals are still to be seen. For instance, there is a strong prejudice against the theory of cosmic cycles, which on philosophical grounds has much to recommend it. Jeans cannot see any use in a repetition of the cosmic drama and gives this as one reason for disbelieving it. Toynbee rejects it with indignation as absolute pessimism. But why call it pessimistic? "This odious scene of violence and cruelty," as Mill called the universe, is a pleasant enough habitation for most people in normal times. When Leopardi exclaims, "All that exists is evil. That anything exists is evil. Everything exists only to achieve evil. Existence itself is an evil; there is no other good than non-existence," we suspect that he was mad, or suffering from jaundice. Marcus Aurelius thought that an intelligent man of forty has seen all that life has to show us. Is it not rather a relief to know that even

politicians cannot do more than a limited amount of mischief?

What may we fairly believe about the future, after we have accepted Bosanquet's warning that to throw our ideals into the future is the death of all sane idealism, and Anatole France's gibe that the future is a convenient place in which to store our dreams? We probably have an immensely long lease of our present abode, so long that the race is a child and civilisation a new-born babe. No doubt the sun may blow up and become a *nova*, or another star may charge into it, but both catastrophes are said to be extremely unlikely. We may therefore assume that there will be time for us to try every kind of political experiment.

But several of the arts seem to have already reached their perfection, and then "stopped," as Aristotle says. We can hardly imagine that there will ever be greater sculptors than Pheidias, greater painters than Raphael and Rembrandt, greater philosophers than Plato and Aristotle, greater poets than Shakespeare, greater physicists than Newton. And in religion perhaps most of us would agree that finality was reached in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. It does not matter, for our present purpose, whether, as I believe myself, the discourses of Christ in the synoptic Gospels are in substance authentic, or whether, as is no doubt historically possible, the early Church (as Samuel Butler puts it) made His name a peg on which to hang its own

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best thoughts. In either case a unique spiritual revelation was made at that time and in that place.

As regards the near future, I fear that it is no "escape" to think of the state of Europe which our children are likely to see.

Eschatological futurism is another story. It depends on the hardest of all philosophical problems, the status of time in reality. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him." All eschatology must be mythical and symbolical; and I fear that those who have frankly abandoned the idea of a geographical heaven somewhere in space, but think it possible to retain the idea of eternity as an endless series of moments of time, to begin for each of us at his death and never to stop, must be willing to take a further step and admit that when "there shall be time no longer" we are contemplating a state of existence of which we know nothing except "by symbols, as in a mirror." Even Spinoza gives us full leave to use these symbols, but it is a little surprising to find Gifford lecturers using without apology the language of popular homiletics. Edwyn Bevan speaks of the time-process coming to an end and being *succeeded* by a timeless state; and even A. E. Taylor, whom I am generally proud to follow, hopes quite seriously that Nelson in heaven may learn not to despise Frenchmen, and Aristotle not to despise the lower

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orders. The idea of progress in eternity is very doubtful, and it is no part of Christianity.

The “principle of Carnot,” if it is universally valid, of course fixes a term, though a very distant one, to all human hopes. But a Platonist, and many who are not Platonists, will think it more likely that no date could be given for the beginning or the end of the cosmos. For if a clock is running down, it must have been wound up, and whatever power wound up the cosmic clock once may presumably wind it up again. Another cosmic cycle to follow ours would give no help to Mr. Bevan, for it would not be “timeless”; and I doubt whether Nelson and Aristotle would be able to go to school there.

Two things, however, I must say before leaving my discussion of futurism as a way of escape. The first is that belief in God is central, belief in human immortality is peripheral. I have met no one who thought that McTaggart’s strange attempt to establish belief in human immortality while denying the existence of God was successful. I need hardly add that no help to religious faith can ever be given by necromancy. The second is that the exploitation of future reward and punishment as a bribe and threat to the unconverted has brought a heavy nemesis on the Churches.

The third way of escape may be called in one word *Detachment*. We often call it the philosophy of India, and it is convenient to take Indian thought

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as the field in which this type may be best studied. But it would be a very shallow judgment, and unjust to India, to suppose that other philosophies and other views of reality have had no place in the long intellectual life of a nation which in the opinion of some good judges has shown more aptitude for metaphysical speculation than any other. Nor would it be at all difficult to find in European mysticism as good examples of the philosophy of detachment as can be gathered from the literature of Brahmanism and Buddhism.

We are told that if we ask Indians what they obtain, or hope to obtain, from their religion, their commonest answer is, "Deliverance." Theirs is therefore a religion of escape. Deliverance is won by the realisation of a spiritual unity with a spiritual Being who is impersonal and super-moral, a Being who is in a mysterious way none other than ourselves. This is a rigorous monistic mysticism, which is necessarily non-ethical, since ethics are ineradicably dualistic. All differences, whether of existence or of value, are in principle denied. There is nothing either good or bad, only the unreal phantasmagoria of the outer world and the shoreless ocean of Nirvana. This is indeed a complete deliverance from sin and sorrow.

In practice, Indian thought gives an ethical character to God; we may remember that the later Platonists called the First Principle the Good as well as the One. The doctrine of reincarnation, which also

appears in Neoplatonism, is strictly inconsistent with Brahmanic mysticism, because it gives some reality to time; and the doctrine of Karma introduces an ethical element, since though nothing is inherited except the bare form of identity and the liabilities contracted in a former phase of existence, retributive justice is done. But as rebirth is itself regarded as an evil, the doctrine of Karma rather accentuates than attenuates the duty of detachment from the world. The belief in Karma, however, is said to have lost ground in modern India.

Another concession to world-affirmation is the common practice of retiring from active life after a youth and middle age spent in the discharge of civic duties, among which the procreation of children has a prominent place. So in Neoplatonism the civic virtues are a necessary preliminary to purification and contemplation.

It is well known that Buddhism underwent transformations which have parallels in other religions. Buddha became a heavenly Being who took on him the form of a man in order to bring knowledge of redemption to mankind. It was no longer necessary to retire from the world in order to win redemption. Those who have earned Nirvana should renounce the privilege in order to live again on earth and help their fellow creatures.

Logically, Indian benevolence should be stoical and unpitying. But in practice it is not so. Compassion is justified on the ground that there is no

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real severance between human beings. In helping my neighbour I am helping myself.

The following brief declaration of faith by a modern Indian philosopher, Bhagavan Das, may perhaps be regarded as typical.

“I believe in one all-including, all-pervading, ever-complete, timeless, spaceless universal Soul or Spirit or Self, which is absolute and changeless, which is also identical with and includes within itself all the countless individual selves, and whose eternally changeless yet ever-changing ideation the entire world-process of all souls and bodies is.”<sup>1</sup>

“No society puts its foot on the neck of the wretched so mercilessly as that of India.” This is the confession of a great Indian thinker, but it may be doubted whether this is a fair criticism of Indian, and still more of Buddhist, religion. I cannot forget what a British officer said during the campaign in Burma. “What a lot of trouble these fellows would have given us if they had been Christians!” It would be more difficult to meet the charge that an Indian not only eats and drinks but *sins* religiously, and that the detachment of the Indian saint is so complete that all the rich contents of the spiritual life are lost in the blank trance.

The real crux is whether we should try to be detached from human affection. Many of the mystics have said “Yes.” They have spurned their nearest relations; they have been known to rejoice when death relieved them of family ties which, they

<sup>1</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (Allen and Unwin) p. 141.

thought, came between them and the love of God; they have been quite indifferent to disasters which threatened their country and European civilisation. Plotinus and Spinoza both express almost callous indifference to public misfortunes. We should remember, perhaps, that both were unmarried, and that neither an Egyptian in the third century nor a Jewish refugee in any Continental country could be expected to be an ardent patriot. Another eminent Jew, Einstein, has confessed that he has "never belonged to my country, my home, my friends, or even to my family, with a whole heart." But this kind of detachment is not the solution which we are looking for. It is not the business of philosophy or religion to make us invulnerable. Perhaps Christianity alone has firmly grasped this truth.

It has often been said that Christianity is essentially an Oriental world-renouncing creed, which did not conquer Europe, but was conquered by it. This is one of those half-truths which are more misleading than downright falsehoods. The early Christians mainly belonged, certainly not to the "proletariat," but to the lower middle class, who racially were neither Greeks nor Romans, and culturally were only superficially Hellenised. They were penalised by the Government more severely than the Jews, and though they were willing to carry off the treasures of Pagan philosophy into their hive, they had little sympathy with the political and social traditions of the dwindling ruling class. The urge to

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flight from the world was not confined to Christians and was naturally encouraged by the miserable condition of Europe after the fourth century. But the Gospel itself, as I hope to show in the next section of this article, was not only detached from the world by its idealism, but attached to it by its fundamental doctrine that God is love. There is a noble inconsistency, perhaps not ultimately irreconcilable, between the Christian's acceptance of hardship and affliction for himself, and his refusal to recommend the like renunciation to his neighbours. If the influence of Asiatic religion has been on the whole paralysing to social activity, the same can hardly be said of Christianised Europe.

I now come to the fourth way of escape, for which I cannot find an appropriate name, unless we are content to call it *Platonic*. The essence of this creed is that the subject and object must be transformed *pari passu*. I have summed up the message of Platonism as an act of faith that "if we live as we ought we shall see things as they are, and if we see things as they are we shall live as we ought." There is no sense in which Platonism can justly be called dualistic, and I entirely agree with Burnet that "to anyone who has tried to live in sympathy with the Greek philosophers, the suggestion that they were intellectualists must seem ludicrous." The mistake, so far as it is not based on pragmatist distrust of the intellect, is probably due to a failure to distinguish between *voūs* and *διάνοια*. Mediaeval philosophers

translated νοῦς by *intellectus*, but they knew that *intellectus* does not mean discursive reasoning. Νοῦς, which the Greek Fathers equated with the Pauline πνεῦμα, is the whole personality acting under the guidance of its highest faculty, a faculty which, as Plotinus says, "all possess but few use," a faculty which may be called super-personal, since, as the mystics were to say, it is a spark kindled at the altar of God, a core of our nature which "can never consent to sin."

The beginning and end of the spiritual journey, says Proclus, are simple; the intermediate stage is complex. So for Clement of Alexandria the first step is from unbelief to faith, which is the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis, a "compendious knowledge of essentials," which verifies itself as experiment passes to experience. *Solvitur ambulando*. The second stage is knowledge, "a sure and firm demonstration of the things received through faith, carrying us on to unshaken conviction and scientific certainty." The fully real can be fully known, as Plato says, and as Spinoza was to say after him. Those who are filled with the most real are most really filled. Finally, knowledge, as it passes into love, begins at once to establish a mutual friendship between the knower and the known. The spirit in love (νοῦς ἐρῶν), as Plotinus says, is already in its heavenly home "Yonder," and the transfigured soul sees the objects of perception no longer as separated from the supreme values and from each

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other, but as irradiated with the light which comes from the ineffable Godhead, for even beatified spirits look upward; “all things pray, except the Supreme,” Proclus says.

“Everything that is Yonder is also Here,” says Plotinus. His heaven is no second physical world. “But soul must become spirit” before we can see the world as it is, and the discipline is long and hard. “This world is only a shadow and an image”; but, as the Quaker Isaac Penington says, though “every truth is a shadow except the last, and every truth is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place; and the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance.”

This is a sketch of the Platonic way of deliverance, *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*, in the words which Newman chose for his epitaph. I may be reminded that in spite of what has been said, the whole emphasis in most of the mystical writers is laid on the *via remotionis*, the discarding of all concrete images in the hope of reaching the absolute Godhead, who in the words of Scotus Erigena, *non immerito nihilum vocitatur*. How does this differ from the Indian’s quest of Nirvana? Do not the Neoplatonists pour scorn on “Matter,” as if the visible world were an unclean thing?

Of course  $\sigma\lambda\eta$  does not mean “matter” as ponderable stuff; it only seems to be evil till we recognise what it is, or rather what it is not. But I think it is true that all who belong to this school of thought

are tempted to dwell too exclusively on the escape of the soul, which may in truth be only part of the unending systole and diastole of the spiritual life. We have seen how the pious Buddhist will not allow the saint to rest in Nirvana while his brothers still remain unredeemed and unenlightened. The Neoplatonists were puzzled by the same problem. Was it a sin, or a fall from perfection, for the soul to "come down" to earth? Is there any explanation except Plotinus's "it had to be," or his reference to the audacity and curiosity which may have tempted even the blessed in the world Yonder? Proclus has a better answer. "The soul came down, wishing to imitate the providence of the gods."

Perhaps the story of the Transfiguration of Christ may illustrate the point which I am trying to make. The three apostles who seem to have been an inner circle of the Twelve were privileged to see a vision of their Master clothed with light as with a garment and attended by the great lawgiver and the greatest prophet of their nation. "Lord, it is good for us to be here," they exclaimed; here upon the holy mount. It was good for them to be there, but not to stay there. The vision soon faded, and they were left to return to the duties for which the vision was shown to them; there was a demon to cast out on the plain below. They were also being prepared for a very heavy trial to their faith; they were soon to witness the cruel death of their Master. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern

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showed thee in the mount." Man is seldom healthy or happy unless he is *making* something.

Withdrawal without return means salvation without love, and this is not permitted to the sons of men. It is punished by a fatal impoverishment of experience: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" A man who has experienced nothing is made no wiser by solitude. But did not Plotinus and the Indian sages love God? It would be absurd to deny it. They were far too great to be much injured by their concentration. The penalties of self-sacrificing specialisation are happily not very severe. But in some of the mystics the absence of natural affection casts a chill upon the admiration which we should like to feel for them. There is at bottom the wish to be invulnerable, and this we were never meant to be.

For ourselves, at this terribly sad time, the chief thing to remember is that the escape to which the mystics show us the way is a real escape. They testify what they have seen, and their witness agrees together. They have climbed the hill of the Lord, and in faltering accents, for human language was not made to express such things, they have described the view from the top. They have given up all that they had to buy the pearl of great price, and the pearl is in their possession. Let there be no mistake about this. Religious experience at its highest and richest is among the data of which any

comprehensive philosophy must take account, and for which it must find room, on penalty of being partial, abstract, and incomplete. If any man, says Bradley, fancies that there is anything more real than what comes to him in religion, he knows not what he says. It is in religion—and we include in religion the disinterested search for the true and the devout homage to the beautiful—that we are in contact with the eternal and absolute values in which the mind of God is revealed to us. They stand in their own right; they can be explained by nothing outside themselves, and not even by each other. If we ask, "What is my duty?" there may be room for much debate. But if I ask, "If I know my duty, why should I do it?" there is no answer except, "Because you must." Pilate's question, "What is truth?" may not be always easy to answer. But to say, "If ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," or (strangely enough) with Voltaire, "*Ah, croyez moi, l'erreur a son mérite,*" is an insult to human nature, and a kind of cosmic impiety. These ultimate values are the most real things in the world, and it is in our power "to live resolutely in the Good, the Whole, and the Beautiful." "Those who have seen it know what I say," Plotinus tells us. This appeal to the experience of those who have a right to give it is the last word of philosophy.

One caution is necessary. We shall not find that evil vanishes as we begin to see things as they are. The brighter the sunshine, the darker are the

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shadows. The saint, not the sinner, sees the world in silhouette. To ascend "beyond good and evil" is not for man in this life. Here we come into conflict with that too facile monism which is the bane of philosophy. The materialist puts mind inside matter and calls the life of the spirit an epiphenomenon, a luminous haze floating idly over the real world of the countable and ponderable. The mentalist puts matter inside mind and would have us believe that we created the world which we perceive. The idealist reduces evil to negation and tells us that it needs only to be supplemented and transmuted in order to take its place in the perfect order. It will not do; the negative signs are there and cannot be turned into positive signs by any legerdemain of transcendental arithmetic. Evil, as we unhappily know too well, is not a defect of good, but the work of "the world-rulers of this darkness." This is why we cannot rest in the beatific vision, nor in Plato's Republic, while our brethren are struggling *in faece Romuli*. In St. Paul's words we must "fill up that which was lacking in the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake."

Macneile Dixon, in his charming and stimulating Gifford Lectures, shows remorselessly how we have been punished for our shallow optimism. "The kind-hearted humanitarians of the nineteenth century decided to improve upon Christianity. The thought of hell offended their susceptibilities. They closed it, and to their surprise the gates of heaven

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closed also with a melancholy clang. The malignant countenance of Satan distressed them. They dispensed with him, and at the same time God took His departure.” “In yes and no all things consist.”

And yet we are citizens of the city the type of which is laid up in heaven. The things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are not seen are eternal. St. Paul was on his way to bonds and death when he wrote those heroic, almost defiant, words at the end of the eighth chapter of Romans. “In all these things we are more than conquerors.” Augustine lived in an age when civilisation was visibly breaking up. The Eternal City had been sacked by the Goths. The Vandals were at the gates of his little cathedral city of Hippo. He looks back at the *grande latrocinium* of the Roman Empire, and forward to the more ruthless savagery of the barbarians who destroyed it. He gives his verdict in unforgettable words: *acceperunt mercedem suam, vanam vanam.*

The world of space and time is sacramental. It is linked to eternal reality through love, the hierophant of the divine mysteries, for in love the divine is incarnated to win deliverance through suffering, victory through defeat, life through death.



## VII

### THE POPULATION PROBLEM



## VII

### THE POPULATION PROBLEM

VITAL statistics and eugenics have long been a favourite hobby of mine. This would not be an excuse for writing a long chapter on the problem of population, if I were not strongly convinced that the regulation of the quantity and quality of population is an absolute necessity for the future of humanity. We shall never have peace if a nation with an unrestricted birth-rate thinks itself justified, and is in fact obliged, to conquer, exploit, and plant its surplus among its neighbours. We must face a progressive deterioration in the quality of our people if we encourage those who are at the bottom of the social ladder to multiply at the expense of those who are able to pay their way as useful citizens. We in our overcrowded island must expect a terrible fate if we are ever at the mercy of an enemy strong enough to cut off our supplies of the necessaries of life. That we escaped this disaster with a margin of a few weeks only in the first Great War is common knowledge. We have accustomed ourselves to a standard of living which we are not earning and which was won for us while we held a privileged position as the workshop of the world, a position which we have lost and can never recover. The nineteenth century, which saw the great

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increase in our numbers, was an absolutely unique episode in history. Our time of expansion is over, and our rivals know it; a period of contraction is inevitable. The British workman now gives less value for his wages than the Chinaman or Japanese, less even than the German or Italian. If we wish to preserve our comforts we must be able to exist without foreign imports, and this can only be if we reduce our population to a figure not very much beyond what it was when the period of expansion "by leaps and bounds" began. This does not mean that we shall cease to be one of the great nations of the world. It only means that we must cease to practise power-politics, and to attempt to police the continent of Europe. All the great things have been done by small nations. Palestine is about as large as Wales; Attica, as a small English county. We may remember the little Italian republics; Holland; Elizabethan England, not yet Great Britain; the Germany of Kant and Goethe and Beethoven, cut up like a jig-saw puzzle. Are these examples that ought to frighten the countrymen of Shakespeare, Milton, and Newton?

I do not see how these facts can be denied. And yet we choose to ignore them. In September, 1945, a Royal Commission issued a White Paper saying that there was a threat of "a gradual fading out of the British people." The Commission had the figures before them. They must have known that the birth-rate has for several years been steadily rising both

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in this country and in almost all other countries, including some which were not involved in the war. The figures are given in this chapter. The arrest in the decline of the birth-rate began long before the war, though the Commission ignores the fact. The majority of the Commission were persons who are not known to have made any study of the question: the few experts were known to be advocates of a high birth-rate. In fact, the Commission seems to have been chosen with the intention of issuing such a Report as they actually produced. The advisability or necessity of putting an end to the senseless multiplication of numbers in an overcrowded island, whose inhabitants depend for their very existence on their power of importing food from abroad, was not even considered. About the same time the so-called Beveridge Act was passed with hardly any opposition. The object of this most mischievous measure was to stimulate artificially the already excessive birth-rate of the slums, imposing fresh burdens on the taxpayer, who was already sinking under an unprecedented load. And then the Eugenics Society, of which I had been an enthusiastic member almost from the first, invited the author of this scheme to give the Galton Lecture. It was enough to make my honoured friend Sir Francis Galton turn in his grave.

It is easy to see why legislation of this kind is popular. There are a hundred kind-hearted people, who enjoy the pleasure of (preferably vicarious)

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generosity, for one who will wade through columns of statistics. But it is necessary to remind sentimentalists that good nature combined with ignorance may be kind only to be cruel. We cannot hope for much from politicians who know that the unborn have no votes, but we still have a free Press. It is the plain duty of those who know the facts to make them public. I shall try in this chapter to be quite fair, and I shall not conceal some new facts which complicate the problem, and which I am unable to explain.

What are the causes of the strong prejudice which undoubtedly exists on this subject? The first is militaristic. If war is to be a necessity or permanent danger, and if success in war depends on the number of men that can be put into the field, people will agree with Napoleon that the most useful woman is she who can produce the greatest supply of "cannon fodder." But the military experts in Germany were doubtful of the value of an enormous army. Roehm and his friends were massacred at the bidding of the General Staff, because this group wished to incorporate an immense number of half-trained Brown Shirts into the regular Army. A great war is won by the owner of the last pound as much as by the owner of the last man. Densely overpeopled countries like India and China have seldom been formidable in war.

Religion is another important factor. There is still a lingering feeling that it may be impious to interfere with the supposed command to be fruitful

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and multiply, which was reasonable enough when the population of the world consisted of one man and one woman. But a much stronger motive is the desire of fanatical institutionalists to increase the numbers of their Church or sect. Roman Catholics in most countries have a rather higher birth-rate than Protestants or Jews, and this is partly owing to the influence of their priests in condemning the restriction of births.

There is also the belief among several peoples—not in Germany only—that they are the salt of the earth, and that the more English or Germans or Chinese or Japanese there are, the better for the future of humanity.

Sheer megalomania—the admiration of bigness for its own sake, is very prevalent. The course of events in the nineteenth century has produced an over-estimate of the value of mere quantity, a rather childish assumption.<sup>1</sup>

We must add the strong reluctance of revolutionists to admit some of the real causes of social discontent. Marx, Proudhon, and others have been as bitter opponents of restriction as any militarist or priest.<sup>2</sup> The numbers of any species are determined

<sup>1</sup> Carr Saunders (*The Population Problem*, Oxford University Press, pp. 21-3) quotes numerous opinions from the early modern period in favour of a large and increasing population. It is not only a recent assumption. But he also shows that many warnings had been uttered before Malthus.

<sup>2</sup> From the first, the supporters of Malthus were mainly the Utilitarians and Whigs; the opponents, the Tories and the Revolutionaries. Religious feeling was not entirely hostile; Paley, Copleston, Chalmers, and Archbishop Sumner were all converted to the “principle” (Carr Saunders).

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not by the procreative capacity of its members, which always greatly exceeds the capacity of the earth to support for very long population increasing in geometrical progression, but by the supply of food and the activity of its enemies. The female cod spawns about two million eggs at a time, of which of course only a small fraction survives. As a rule there is a kind of equilibrium between reproduction and destruction. If a species is nearly exterminated, those who feed upon it cannot survive. There may be an alternation of increase and decrease. Occasionally however a migrant may discover virgin soil and multiply enormously, like the rabbit in Australia and the first white settlers in North America, where for a time the population almost doubled itself in each generation. The microbes of some pestilences have caused destructive epidemics in lands hitherto immune to them, and have afterwards stabilised themselves as endemic diseases.

Sutherland has shown that fertility and care for offspring tend to vary inversely. The young of mammals are cared for, and so their fecundity is much lower than in species which deposit their eggs and leave them to chance. The fecundity of civilised man is greater than among savages; for various reasons large families are rare among backward races. Wandering hunters cannot increase rapidly; a mother can hardly carry two babies. The grass-land nomads are normally about as numerous as the steppes will support. It was said by the Greeks that

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before the Trojan war the world was too full of people. The danger was met by colonisation; the Italians also occasionally “swarmed” like bees in what was called the *ver sacrum*. When the fields for emigration were cut off, the Greeks kept down their numbers partly by wars and civic massacres, and partly by female infanticide. Very few Greeks reared more than one daughter. Slaves, Xenophon says, should be allowed to have children as a reward for good conduct.

What happened in Greece in the Hellenistic age may seem to give some support to those who fear depopulation in modern Europe. We do not know the extent of the emigration to Asia after the conquests of Alexander; it was certainly considerable. The soil of Greece and the islands no doubt deteriorated; the woods were cut down and the soil was washed into the sea. The goat is a great enemy of the farmer. Polybius says that in his time few parents in Greece cared to rear more than two children, and ascribes it to love of comfort. Local patriotism was almost extinct.

Depopulation is a rare phenomenon, but there have been instances. The Guanches of the Canaries are said to have committed race-suicide, and Stevenson, who studied the conditions in the South Sea Islands, found that the inhabitants of the Marquesas are becoming extinct from want of births. The same fate threatened the Maoris in the last century, but that vigorous race has recovered

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its high spirit, and is now increasing rather more rapidly than the whites. In two hundred years New Zealand may be half Polynesian. But the conditions in these cases are quite different from those in the advanced nations of Europe, where there is at present no *taedium vitae*, and where almost all parents desire one or more children of each sex, though they do not wish for large families. The few exceptions include persons who are not likely to transmit desirable qualities.

The partial disappearance of the once prolific ancient Italian stock has been the subject of many debates. I have discussed it shortly in my third chapter, on the Curse of War. Among the causes alleged are slavery, infanticide, celibacy, wars and purges, large estates, plague and malaria. I do not think that all these causes together will fully account for what happened. A healthy race recovers very quickly from famine, epidemics, and war. In the third century and after there was much pessimism and world-weariness, but this may be rather a symptom than a cause. I have mentioned inflation, which again is a symptom, as a real factor. Another cause has been sought in the high death-rate, which has been studied, from very inadequate materials, by two or three statisticians. The rate of course varied, as ours does, at different times and in different places. The result arrived at, whatever it may be worth, is that the average duration of life in the Empire was about twenty-five years, the males

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living, contrary to universal experience in modern times, rather longer than the females. If this was the death-rate among those whose age was recorded on monuments, it was no doubt higher among the slave population, certainly of those who worked in the *ergastula*. In New Zealand, the healthiest country in the world, the average duration of life is about sixty-three years. Tertullian, writing before the troubles of the third century, says that "the whole world is becoming better cultivated and more fully peopled." "Our numbers are becoming burdensome to the world, which can hardly supply us with food." This testimony must be remembered, but Tertullian may have generalised from North Africa, which was then prosperous.

Those who lay the blame for the depopulation of the Roman Empire on Christianity are in my opinion mistaken. The glorification of celibacy was quite foreign to Jewish ideas. It conquered the Christian Church, but was not Christian in origin. The Church set itself earnestly against infanticide, abortion, and homosexuality. No doubt Galton was right in saying that the insistence on celibacy for those who followed what was thought the higher vocation had an injurious effect by refusing parentage to many of the gentler spirits in each generation, but this would not seriously check the growth of population. No Church-directed nation, so far as I know, has suffered from a decay in numbers, except Spain after the Counter-Reformation. In that

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country emigration, militarism, religious persecution, and the financial disorder caused by the influx of precious metals from America, had more to do with this decline than the excessive number of priests, monks, and nuns.

No one who has studied social conditions in the Dark and early Middle Ages—for example, in Luchaire's book on France in the reign of Philip Augustus—can wonder that there was no threat of overpopulation then. Even in the first half of the eighteenth century there were years when the deaths in England outnumbered the births. The towns were very insanitary, and untaxed gin demoralised the town-dwellers terribly. The Black Death, and in Germany the Thirty Years War, caused a temporary depopulation.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, and still more in the nineteenth, a wholly unexampled increase took place. It was made possible by the new technical inventions which enormously increased the exports that could be exchanged for food, and by the opening up of vast food-producing areas. It is generally but erroneously believed that there was a sharp increase in the birth-rate. The method of increase was by a progressive decline in the death-rate, which would have necessitated a corresponding fall in the birth-rate but for the abnormal and temporary conditions mentioned. After the seventies the old birth-rate could not be maintained, since the pressure of overpopulation

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could no longer be denied, and the shrinkage continued until after the slump in 1929 and the following years, when a slow rise in the birth-rate, from causes which to me are very obscure, began not only in this country but all over Europe. This rise, as I shall show, was not checked even by the Second World War, a phenomenon which is surely very extraordinary. In the First World War the birth-rate fell sharply.

I must now burden my readers with some figures, which are necessary to support my argument. I will give my authorities in footnotes, since I do not wish the facts to be received on my unsupported testimony.

The population of the world in 1930 was just over 2,000 millions.<sup>1</sup> It may now be 2,200 millions. Until a reliable census is taken in China there is a margin of possible error amounting to several millions. In the year 1800 there were less than 850 millions;<sup>2</sup> since then the numbers have nearly trebled. The annual increase now is about 20 millions a year. The maldistribution is extraordinary. In 1770 Kuczinski gives the population of Europe as 152,500,000; in 1930 it was 500 millions. The density per square mile of our home country and its offshoots in 1932 was as follows: England and Wales, 675; United States, 41; Canada, 2.91; Australia, 2.2; New Zealand, 1.47. We must not suppose that

<sup>1</sup> Carr Saunders, *World Population* (Oxford University Press), pp. 17-45.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. East, *Mankind at the Crossroads* (Scribners), p. 66.

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all these new countries are likely ever to be as thickly populated as England. Europe is the only continent that has no deserts. Half of Canada is too cold for raising crops; there is a rainless tract in North America; and of Australia it has been said that "these worthy people live on the rim of a soup-plate." "That is nonsense," an Australian statesman said to me. "I can remember when the Never-never country was supposed to begin two hundred miles from Sydney." Still, the central part of Australia is certainly irreclaimable desert. The potential population of Australia, based on that of the United States, has been estimated at fifty millions. It is significant that the density in the United States diminishes progressively as we move from the earliest settlements in the east to the more recently occupied States in the west. We may compare the number of acres per person in Rhode Island, 0.9; Massachusetts, 1.1; New Jersey, 1.2; Connecticut, 1.8; New York, 2.2; with Nevada, 637; Wyoming, 246; Montana, 168; Arizona, 145; New Mexico, 145.<sup>1</sup>

It would not be worth while to quote the numerous pessimistic warnings of "race-suicide," some of which speak foolishly enough of the coming extinction of our people. They are based on what has been called the fallacy of extrapolation, as if the decline in the birth-rate were bound to continue until it reached zero. Even if the downward process

<sup>1</sup> Burch, *Population Roads*, p. 79.

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had not now been reversed, as I shall presently show, the half-conscious aim everywhere is to reach an optimum population, adjusted to the change in conditions which has obviously taken place.

A very important question is whether the decline is mainly voluntary, or whether there may be also a biological decline in fertility connected with the increase in comfort. This question has been fully discussed by Raymond Pearl,<sup>1</sup> who has conducted very intimate enquiries among American families. Pearl is best known for his theory of a "logistic curve" in population growth. He thinks that growth may be traced in a line resembling the letter S; that is to say that after a period of rapid growth the numbers of births and deaths gradually approach equality. He calculates that the population of the United States is not likely to exceed 200 millions. He adduces strong arguments in favour of his theory, based partly on his experiments with the fruit-fly, *Drosophila*. His critics have objected that (as he owns himself) incalculable changes may upset the regularity of his logistic curve; he has in fact been obliged to alter his first estimate of future numbers. But he has also found that the educated classes are more temperate in their marital relations than farmers and manual labourers, and he thinks that this may have something to do with the differential birth-rate, which must be discussed presently.

<sup>1</sup> Pearl, *The Biology of Population Growth* (Alfred Knopf Inc.), and other works.

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Dr. R. A. Fisher, at the World Population Conference in 1927, said:

"We have no very exact information before 1750, but as far as I have studied the question from that period onwards, it is the decrease in the death-rate which is the important factor until the middle of the nineteenth century. Until then, the movements in the birth-rate are almost negligible. . . . The chief drawback of this curve as applied to human populations is the assumption that relative growth rate is determined only by the size of the population. Other factors undoubtedly influence the relative growth rate."

My own opinion is that in the absence of any disturbing factors, which can seldom be predicted, populations do tend to stabilise themselves as Pearl says. If this is so, we need fear neither an unlimited overcrowding nor the extinction of a population. The problem will be to establish and maintain an optimum number.

The population of the world is obviously limited by the food supply. But need this remain nearly constant? Are there not parts of the globe which have not yet been brought under the plough? May not scientific agriculture largely increase the productivity of the soil? Is there not a possibility of the discovery of new kinds of food? Aldous Huxley,<sup>1</sup> writing in 1937, says:

"According to Dr. Willcox, any country which chooses to apply the most advanced methods in the production of food plants can support a population far in excess of the densest population existing anywhere at the present time. It seems probable that dirtless farming will produce an agricultural

<sup>1</sup> Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (Chatto and Windus), p. 44.

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revolution compared to which the industrial revolution will seem the most trifling of social disturbances."

Ten years have elapsed, and the agricultural revolution has not yet materialised. I devoutly hope it never will. The prospect of an England entirely covered with suburban villas is not agreeable. It seems safer to disregard such possibilities, and to consider how far the world's food supply will go under present conditions.

Dr. Bennett, Chief of the United States Soil Conservation Service, says:<sup>1</sup>

"To-day the total productive soil of the world is stringently limited. There are about four billion<sup>2</sup> acres of arable land to fill the needs of two billion people. Two and a half acres per capita are necessary to provide even a minimum adequate diet."

Sir John Boyd Orr said in 1943 that the earth's supply of food would need to be increased by 150 to 200 per cent. to maintain the present population of the world in health. Dr. Parran, of the United States Public Health Service, says: "The greatest possible increase in food production will not for decades be enough to meet the minimum adequate diet." The United States Food Conference reports: "It seems likely that there will be a world shortage of meats and milks and other livestock products, of oils, fats, and even such high-caloric foods as rice."

<sup>1</sup> Burch, *Population Roads* (Population Reference Bureau, Washington), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> In America a billion means a thousand million, in England a million million.

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McDougall, Australian member of the former League of Nations Economic Committee, who is supported by a group of economists and medical scientists, reports: "To ensure that all sections of the population have enough of the right kinds of food would require an expansion of cereals 58 per cent., meat 90 per cent., milk 125 per cent., fruits and vegetables 300 per cent." And in fifty years, if things go on as they are, we shall have to provide for 550 million more people.

East, in the book already quoted, has considered with great care the conditions in the various countries which are still able to export food. There was a time when the production of food rose by "leaps and bounds." It was not all legitimate expansion. The natural resources of the world were being recklessly consumed. Not only did Britain, for example, export the coal which ought to have been husbanded for posterity, but greedy and unscientific farming has permanently ruined more than a hundred million acres of good American soil, which are now a derelict "dust-bowl."

Hard labour with simple tools, as in China, gives the greatest returns per acre. But some lands in eastern Europe, including Russia, were importing machinery before the Great War, and were thus able to utilise land untilled before, and so to export wheat. They were nearly in the condition of the United States before 1880. East, writing before the second war, thought that these lands might expand,

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more slowly, for thirty years. Switzerland, by the use of water-power, and Spain, by improved methods of farming, might perhaps support more people. The remaining countries of Europe, in his opinion, are all overpopulated. Whence comes the food which these nations are obliged to buy with their industrial products? Outside Europe there were four main sources of supply—Australasia, Canada, India, and Argentina. “In less than thirty years”<sup>1</sup> Australia will consume her own food. Canada is doubling her numbers in each generation, and wheat cannot be grown profitably further north than its present limits, owing to the risk of summer frosts. Canada, like Australia, will cease to export food in a few years. Argentina, with Uruguay, is in a somewhat better position, but personally I anticipate a great immigration into South America from the stricken European continent, and of course from Japan if Asiatics are admitted. This continent will fill up more rapidly than any other part of the world. Whether the food products of India will in future be available for export seems very doubtful. The population, thanks to British rule, has risen to over 350 million, in spite of an infant mortality which in the early years of this century numbered from 200 to 350 per thousand.

It seems to me utterly impossible that the present

<sup>1</sup> East's book was written in 1923. His estimate was certainly too pessimistic.

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rate of increase in Europe can be maintained, and unlikely that the overpopulated countries in that continent will find it easy to import sufficient food even for their present numbers.

The late Lord Keynes,<sup>1</sup> an acknowledged authority, agrees with East.

“The prosperity of Europe was based on the facts that owing to the large exportable surplus of foodstuffs in America she was able to purchase food at a cheap rate measured in terms of the labour required to produce her own exports, and that as a result of her previous investments of capital, she was entitled to a substantial amount annually without any payment in return at all. The second of these factors then seemed out of danger, but as the result of the growth of population overseas, chiefly in the United States, the first was not secure. In short, Europe’s claim on the resources of the New World was becoming precarious; the law of diminishing returns was at last reasserting itself, and was making it necessary year by year for Europe to offer a greater quantity of other commodities to obtain the same amount of bread; and Europe therefore can by no means afford the disorganisation of any of her principal sources of supply. . . . The essential facts of the situation, as I see them, are expressed simply. Europe consists of the densest aggregations of population in the history of the world. This population is accustomed to a relatively high standard of life, in which, even now, some sections of it anticipate improvement rather than deterioration. In relation to other continents Europe is not self-sufficient; in particular it cannot feed itself. . . . The danger confronting us therefore is the rapid depression of the standard of life of the European population to a point which will mean actual starvation for some (a point already reached in Russia and approximately reached in Austria). Men will not always die quietly. . . . Some of the catastrophes of past history, which have thrown back human progress for centuries, have been due to the reactions

<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (Macmillan), Chapters II and VI.

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following on the sudden termination, whether in the course of nature or by the act of man, of temporarily favourable conditions which have permitted the growth of populations beyond what could be provided for when the favourable conditions were at an end."

Lastly, at the International Conference on population problems held in London in 1931, Professor Fairchild of New York said:

"The nineteenth century was unique in human history and will probably remain so. During that century there came to fruition the combination of three great improvements in the supporting power of the earth—the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, and the industrial and commercial revolutions. These gave the human species a new chance such as it had never experienced before, and the phenomenal population increase of the century was the answer. There is not the slightest hope that such a combination of fortunate circumstances can ever be repeated. Whatever technical advances may still be in store, there will never be added to them another hemisphere."

Among the unpredictable but formerly inevitable checks on population are those enumerated by Malthus—pestilence, famine, and war. The great plagues which periodically devastated the ancient and mediæval world, like the Black Death and the plague of London, are no longer to be dreaded, though the cholera caused great alarm in the earlier part of Queen Victoria's reign, and the first World War was followed by a pandemic of influenza which seems to have caused more deaths than the war itself. The deaths in this country were 112,000, and it was especially destructive in India and South Africa, lands not immediately affected by the war.

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Famines from time to time relieve the pressure of population in China and India, and in 1847 the potato disease halved the swollen population of Ireland. Some five or six million died of famine in Russia during the revolution, a horror which was connived at by the Bolshevik government on the plea that the peasants were withholding supplies for the towns. The Germans asserted that our blockade caused hundreds of thousands of deaths. It may be so, but such statistics as I have been able to examine do not confirm the charge.

The losses of numbers by war are an interesting subject, on which I propose to write at rather greater length. Many figures of losses in battle are given by ancient historians, but the more I study statistics the more convinced I am that the numbers given by these historians, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, are so untrustworthy that it is hardly worth while to discuss them. For modern war my chief authority is *Losses of Life caused by War*,<sup>1</sup> by T. Vedel-Petersen and Samuel Dumas, a volume issued by the Committee of Research of the Carnegie Endowment.

War is not favourable to the compilation of statistics, both because time and quiet are lacking for accurate work, and because numbers are often intentionally falsified. Napoleon is the author of the proverb *mentir comme un bulletin*, and his own bulletins were mendacious. For example, at the battle of

<sup>1</sup> Dumas and Petersen, *Losses of Life caused by War*, Oxford University Press.

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Eylau the French lost over 26,000 men; Napoleon acknowledged only 1,900 killed and 5,700 wounded.

But two results plainly emerge. In the wars before 1870 a comparatively small number were killed in action, and the deaths due to wounds and disease were enormously greater. In the Seven Years War (1756-63) the Austrians lost 32,000 killed and 93,400 by wounds and disease. The Prussians entered the war with 126,000 men, and Frederick the Great estimated that 180,000 had lost their lives before the end of it. Of 80,000 Russians who entered Poland in 1757, less than half survived. Most of these losses were due to disease.

During the twenty years when we were at war with Napoleon, 6,663 British sailors were killed by the enemy, 13,621 were drowned or perished in shipwrecks or fires, 72,102 died of disease. In the British army at the same period 25,567 were killed in action or died of wounds, 193,851 died of disease. Napoleon's Grand Army was almost annihilated; at Vilna 25,000 out of 30,000 prisoners died of typhus.

In the Crimean War, where the arrangements were notoriously scandalous, we lost only 4,602 men by enemy action, and 17,580 by disease. The French lost 20,240 by wounds and 75,375 by disease. The Russians lost hundreds of thousands by privation or disease; Chance gives the number of deaths as 630,000. The Austrians, who did not fight at all, lost 35,000 by disease.

In the American Civil War (1861-65) the

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Northern States lost 110,000 killed and 224,586 from disease; the South lost about 120,000 from disease. But there is a good deal of variation in these estimates.

In the Franco-German War of 1870 for the first time more men died of wounds than from disease, but typhus and typhoid were both very fatal.

In the Boer War we lost 5,734 killed and 14,382 by disease, mainly typhoid. The Boer losses in action were much lower than ours, but the mortality among children in the concentration camps was terrible.

In the Russo-Japanese War the losses by disease were much less than the fatal casualties. The exact numbers are uncertain.

In the First Great War, according to Laurence Stallings (*The First World War*, William Heinemann, 1933), the casualties were as follows. (He does not cite his sources of information, but we may be satisfied that his figures are approximately accurate. He does not mention deaths from disease.) Russia, 2,752,064 killed,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million prisoners or missing; France, 1,427,800 killed and 453,500 prisoners or missing; Great Britain and Dominions, a million killed; Italy, half a million killed and 1,359,000 prisoners or missing; Germany, 1,611,104 killed, 772,522 prisoners or missing; Austria, 911,000 killed, 443,000 prisoners or missing; Turkey, 436,924 killed. Vedel-Petersen's figures are substantially in agreement, but he gives 1,300,000 Russian losses by disease. "The total number of military persons killed and died in the war must lie between ten and

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eleven millions, but Russia's losses are not known and presumably never will be."

I have offered no estimate of the number of Frenchmen killed in the Napoleonic wars, since the authorities differ widely. Taine gives 1,700,000, Delbrück only 500,000. Napoleon boasted that less than half the victims in the Grand Army in Russia were French.

The deaths of soldiers and sailors by enemy action and by disease are far from being the whole butcher's bill of war. Under conscription nearly all the physically competent men are drafted off for military service; the married men are separated from their wives. The normal result is a very heavy decline in the birth-rate, which is only partially redressed by a hump in the line for two years after the peace. Sir Bernard Mallet, the Registrar-General, in a Presidential Address to the Statistical Society, gave the following estimates "up to the end of June, 1918." The United Kingdom had lost by the fall of births 500,000 lives, Germany about 2,600,000. It must be remembered that Germany mobilised nearly her whole forces at the beginning of the war, and that they fought only on foreign soil. Hungary lost a million and a half. On the other hand, both infantile mortality and suicide declined in the belligerent countries. On the whole, the loss of lives caused by the absence of husbands was about as great as the number killed in action.

I regret that I have no trustworthy statistics of the

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losses in the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> The massacres of Jews, Poles, and Russians reached terrible figures; the Russians admit the loss of many million lives. Their estimates of German casualties were probably exaggerated. I should guess that not more than three million German soldiers died by enemy action. Our own losses, and those of the French, who surrendered after a short resistance, were much lower than in the first war. But I have figures for the birth-rate during the war, and these are so contradictory of what happened in the first war that if they were not so well authenticated I could not believe them to be true. They show that between 1939 and 1943 the birth-rate rose rather sharply in almost every European country except Germany and Russia, for which no numbers are given. The statement was made by E. P. Schumacher, the young Oxford statistician, and was printed in the *Observer*.

		1938	1943
United Kingdom	.	15.5	16.9
Australia	.	19.4	22.3
France	.	14.6	16.0
Holland	.	20.5	23.0
Denmark	.	18.1	21.4
Sweden	.	14.9	19.3
Switzerland	.	15.2	19.2
United States	.	17.6	22.0

<sup>1</sup> Lord Beveridge, in the *New York Times Magazine*, gives the following figures as "rough estimates" of civilian and military losses:

Russia, 7,000,000  
 France, 820,000  
 Poland, 4,620,000  
 Jugoslavia, 1,680,000  
 Greece, 490,000  
 Germany, 3,600,000  
 Great Britain, 400,000

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When we remember that millions of Frenchmen in the prime of life were made prisoners or were deported to Germany, the rise in the French birth-rate is very difficult to account for. I have no explanation to offer. In any case, it ought to silence the croakers who babble about race-suicide.

All students of population are interested in the problem of the differential birth-rate. It is not a case for moral lectures. The educated classes choose to have small families because they wish to do their best for their children; not, as a rule, because they wish to spend their money on themselves. The expenses of a public school and university education in England are very high. In other classes the main reasons for restriction are different. Before the Factory Acts children might be a deplorable economic asset to their parents when little more than babies; the parents who sent them to the mills regarded this bad system as a regrettable necessity. The Speenhamland expedient of supplementing wages from the rates, Professor Trevelyan says, stimulated population in a very undesirable way. Under present conditions those trades in which women earn wages have a much lower rate than the miners, whose wives earn no money. The miners, who though they are politically troublesome are physically strong, have the highest birth-rate next to the feeble-minded and the casual labourer. The sufferings of women from excessive and unwanted pregnancies are cruel. The publication

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*Maternity* (1916) mentions that 160 mothers had borne 1,396 live children, besides 83 still-births and 218 miscarriages. This state of things was formerly borne with stolid acquiescence, though it often shortened the mother's life; it is so borne no longer in the middle class.

The Census Bureau of the United States finds that the lowest educational or economic third is increasing more than twice as fast as the highest third. In three generations the descendants of the lowest third would be more than nine times as numerous as those of the highest third. The famous intelligence tests showed that the lowest scores came from families averaging six children. Highest in number of children came the feeble-minded, dull, and backward. Normal families averaged less than four children; those of superior intelligence, a little over three; those of very superior intelligence came from families averaging less than two and a half.<sup>1</sup> In my Galton Lecture (1919) I wrote:

“The competent working-class families, as well as the rich, are far less fertile than the waste products of our civilisation. Dr. Tredgold found that 43 couples of the parasitic class averaged 7.4 children per family, while 91 respectable couples from the working class averaged only 3.7 per family. The birth-rate of the Hearts of Oak Building Society, patronised by the best type of mechanic, fell 52 per cent. between 1880 and 1901.”

In America the Census Bureau for 1929 gave the following figures for living children per family:

<sup>1</sup> *Population Bulletin*, January, 1946.

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Miners, 6.4; farmers, 6.1; general labourers, 5.6; doctors, 3.0; architects, 2.7.<sup>1</sup>

We might fill many pages with statistics of the comparative sterility of the educated, especially of college-trained women in America. The proportion of men rejected for military service both there and in England is very ominous of the physical decline in industrialised communities. We are further reminded that the modern system of subsidising from the taxes the ablest children of the working man, and raising them into the infertile professional class, is radically dysgenic. As Dr. Schiller said, we are skimming off the cream in each generation and throwing it away.

But before pronouncing a sweeping condemnation of our present methods, there are two things that must be considered. An Italian expert has said: "We must not assume that the psycho-physical endowment of the population corresponds with the economic." This is obviously true. The American proverb (it is said to have originated in Lancashire) "from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves, three generations," is quite untrue of English society. De Ruvigny's interesting study of the "Plantagenet Roll of the Blood Royal" traces the pedigrees of thousands of English families, most of whom have lived for centuries at or near the same social level. The founder of the family, who perhaps married a middle-class descendant of the Plantagenets—he

<sup>1</sup> *Burch*, p. 83.

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estimates that there are at least 70,000 of them living —may have been an able man. But it is rather rare for marked ability to be transmitted for more than one generation. There are a few exceptions, such as the Darwins and the musical family of the Bachs; and the names of Pollock, Coleridge, and others, appear more than twice on our rolls of honour. Galton, I venture to think, rather underestimated the pull that the sons of distinguished men sometimes have, especially in politics but also in law and perhaps in the Church. The intelligence tests were not entirely conclusive. On the other side, the theory that great men have usually been epileptics or otherwise undesirable parents is nonsense. Most eminent men, as Galton and Havelock Ellis said, might have defied even a mad-doctor to do his worst. We must however admit that the very greatest have either died childless or had sons who were commonplace or worse. We may remember Plato, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Marcus Aurelius, Cromwell, Shakespeare, and Goethe.

Those who, like G. K. Chesterton, scoff at eugenics ought consistently to enter a cart-horse colt for the Derby. But the laws of heredity are more complex than was once believed. All we have a right to say is that while there are a few really superior families, belonging to different classes, there is a large amount of social refuse, whom nature would have killed and civilisation sedulously keeps alive. These ought not to have children, and

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they have many more than their share. But it is most desirable that eugenists should give no handle to the aspersion of the Marxians that they consider the tax-paying class as necessarily more valuable from the racial point of view than the wage-earners. The middle class have hitherto been the backbone of the community intellectually, and it would be deplorable if envy and jealousy should succeed in depressing them below the level of those who rely on pecuniary aid from the government. They are the least organised and on the whole the most vulnerable section of the nation; in parts of the Continent they seem to be in danger of extinction.

But there is another aspect of the differential birth-rate which to a believer in the value of the western European stock, and especially of our countrymen, may have a still more serious look. I do not agree with writers like the American Madison Grant, who are the victims of the Nordic theory as propounded by Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. It has been taken up enthusiastically by many Germans such as Günther, whose book has been translated into English. The Nordics are perhaps no better endowed than the so-called Alpines and the Mediterraneans. The Swedes, who are nearly pure Nordics, are a very handsome race physically, but they have not produced more than their share of great men. The Germans are a mixture of Nordic and Alpine, with some Slavic and possibly Mongoloid elements; the British of Nordic

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and Mediterranean, with a slight blend of round-heads. We may put aside this dream of racial superiority, and consider rather the secular duel between East and West. For a thousand years before the beginning of the modern period Europe, excluding Russia, which is geographically part of the Asiatic land mass, was on the defensive. The Mongolian nomads might have extinguished European civilisation, if the West had had steppes like Russia and Hungary. The Arabs, within a few decades after their emergence from the desert, struck down the East Roman Empire, exterminated the Vandals in North Africa, conquered Spain, invaded France, and even after they had begun to decline drove the chivalry of Europe out of Palestine. The Tartars, reappearing on the scene, kept Russia in thraldom for two hundred years, and in the seventeenth century the Turks threatened Vienna. Before the great age of discovery the East was generally the aggressor. Only once, under Alexander the Great, the West turned the tables and invaded the home lands of the Asiatic. The Roman Empire, though it made large annexations in the east, aimed only at protecting the Mediterranean enclave.

The invention of gunpowder, and two great feats of naval enterprise, opened the world to the European nations, who by a stroke of luck which can never be repeated found in the Americas and in Australasia vast and almost empty lands suitable for white colonisation. At the beginning of the first

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World War, out of 53 million square miles of habitable land, only 5 million were not under white government. Then the tide began to turn. The victory of Japan over Russia sent a wave of hope through all the coloured peoples. The revolt of Asia, with its slogan, "Asia for the Asiatics," has not been ended by the defeat of Japan. The death-knell of the British Raj in India, and of the French and Dutch possessions in the Far East, has sounded.

But it is not the growing nationalism of Asia of which I wish to speak. Whether the Western nations restrict their numbers or not, can the high-standard races hold their own against peoples with a lower standard of living and a higher standard of work, peoples who, to put it shortly, give better value for their wages? The Asiatic menace, the so-called Yellow Peril, has long been held over our heads. This was the subject of C. H. Pearson's famous book, and this is what alarmed Rudyard Kipling after his visit to Canton. I remember dining with two merchants from the Far East who had the gravest fears about the future. A Celestial who was present listened with a bland smile. Pearson and Kipling both feared the Chinese rather than the Japanese, and for those who take long views they were right. The Japanese are not very good colonists. They cannot compete with the Chinese as labourers. They find some climates too cold and others too hot for them, whereas the Chinese can flourish either in Mongolia or at

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Singapore. But Japanese competition, encouraged and subsidised by an aggressive government, has been very formidable. Japanese stockings have been offered, at Manchester of all places, at threepence a pair. A French resident in Japan, quoted by Lothrop Stoddard,<sup>1</sup> says:

“Even in the enervating heat of summer the industrious Japanese keep on working. Their life is regulated by a slow but constant rhythm that would exhaust a European in a few days. Rising at the break of dawn, the Japanese work far into the night without stopping. Labour and life are so intimately interwoven that they can never be separated.”

A French textile manufacturer exclaimed: “Even if I stole my raw material and paid my employees nothing, I could not compete with such prices.” In the Philippines, by instituting chain-stores after the American model, the Japanese even ousted the Chinese.

In this desperate struggle for markets the Japanese not only depleted their small stores of coal, iron and copper, and starved their own workers, but aroused the hostility of powerful rivals. Yet they could not help themselves. They inhabit a mountainous country, poor in natural resources; they are grossly overpopulated, with a large annual surplus of births. Needs must when the devil drives. We may even say that their disastrous gamble on the chance of a German victory was forced upon them, unless they were content to reduce their numbers. Emigration was forbidden by the whites, who knew too

<sup>1</sup> *Clashing Tides of Colour* (Scribners), p. 253.

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well what their fate would be if Asiatics were allowed to colonise Australia, California, and British Columbia. Hawaii is already almost a Japanese colony, and parts of South America may be willing to receive Japanese emigrants.

It is often said that the labouring class in Asia will not long tolerate the coolie rate of wages. This is true, but the difference between the European and the Asiatic standard is far too great to be bridged over. The notion that international agreements may stabilise a world-wide rate of wages not lower than the average European level is fantastic, and would not be at all acceptable to the American or British workman. The Asiatic workman would no doubt be glad to have enough to eat, but he is as indifferent to comfort as our ancestors in the Middle Ages. "The English," said Disraeli, "on the strength of a few mechanical discoveries, have mistaken comfort for civilisation." In some Dissenting chapels a popular hymn declared:

'Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live;  
'Tis religion must supply  
Solid comforts when we die.

The notion of beatified spirits living in a state of solid comfort was characteristic of the nineteenth century.

The immigration of cheap labour can no doubt be prevented, except after defeat in war. Tariff walls can be erected against the importation of cheap

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foreign goods, which means of course that prices are artificially raised against the home consumer. But this expedient is not always a simple one. When our government threatened to exclude Japanese goods from India, the Japanese were able to retaliate effectually till a compromise was agreed upon. The exclusion of cheap labour may be justified, if the alternative is the suppression of the European worker. The policy is more doubtful when there is a tendency to forbid the immigration of European workers. In countries where, as in South Africa, there is a supply of indigenous cheap labour, the white immigrants form a kind of aristocracy who will not touch manual labour, which they call Kaffir's work, and they prevent the Kaffir from taking "a white man's job." But for the coloured population, which in Natal includes a large influx of Indians, that favoured part of the world might be the home of many millions of our own and the Dutch races.

The danger to the high-standard nations does not come only from the competition of coloured peoples. In France there were before the war three millions of aliens, who did the rough work which the French would not touch.<sup>1</sup> About half the miners were foreigners. In our own country Lancashire and Glasgow are full of Irish Catholics, whose loyalty to the country of their adoption is not beyond

<sup>1</sup> The recent census, in December, 1946, shows that a large number of aliens have left France. The French population shows a loss of about 1 per cent. since 1936, which may be the result of deaths caused by the war.

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dispute. But the strongest example comes from North America.

We did not lose America in the reign of George III; we are losing it now. It is true that the people of the United States, awakened rather late to the danger of being swamped by alien immigration, severely restricted the quotas of newcomers from most countries; but French Canada and Mexico remain open, and there are few more prolific races than the French Canadians and the Mexicans. When I visited New England I found that the descendants of the old Anglo-Saxon immigrants had almost vanished from some of the older townships. New Haven was half full of Italians; other places were occupied by Poles and French Canadians. I believe Texas is filling up with Mexicans, whom the Americans do not regard as very desirable citizens. Arnold Toynbee had the same experience that I had. He saw an old colonial village entirely deserted, and a town in Connecticut peopled by French Canadians. He supposed that the descendants of the old colonists had gone West to reclaim new districts; but my own questions led me to think that this fine old stock, after decimating themselves in the Civil War, are going the way of other aristocracies and giving place to people of simpler habits. The old tirades against luxury, familiar to us in our school-days from the Odes of Horace, are still justified. *Non his iuventus orta parentibus. . . .* The future does not belong to the high-standard classes or nations.

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Economic nationalism may protect for a time countries with a large area and abundant natural resources; it will not save those which depend for their existence on foreign trade. Nor can emigration, as I once hoped, enable nations like our own to increase their numbers. Our people, corrupted by politicians, prefer to stay at home and batten on the rates and taxes. Those who might be induced to go are just those whom the Dominions do not want. If we have still any hardy pioneers, we do not want to lose them. The Australians have had a bad fright, and perhaps will no longer keep our countrymen out; but the dominant party there are bent on preserving their high standard of living, and are not likely ever to follow the advice of Theodore Roosevelt and people Queensland with Italians, who are good workers and used to a warm climate.

I have said that facts have recently come to light which may modify our view of the danger from a dysgenic differential birth-rate. At Stockholm the differences in birth-rates are reversed. "The fertility in the group of Stockholm families was found to be lowest with the least education and to increase regularly with further education."<sup>1</sup> These facts were brought to the notice of the 1927 Conference by the Swede Dr. Edin, and caused the greatest surprise and some incredulity. But in 1930 Burgdorfer made a similar discovery of the differential birth-rate in large German cities. In 1932, at the London

<sup>1</sup> *Population Bulletin*, January, 1946.

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Conference, Dr. Edin supplemented his original findings, and the facts are no longer disputed. Dr. Edin said:

“Couples having an income of at least 10,000 Swedish crowns had a birth-rate 50 per cent. above the rate for couples with an income of less than 4,000 crowns, and even this group had a rate perceptibly higher than that of the working class.”

Burgdorfer found that in large German cities families with the highest incomes (above 50,000 marks) had on an average about 50 per cent. more children than families with less than 1,500. This was in 1930. In Holland I believe there is hardly any difference between the birth-rate of economic classes. Drs. Thompson and Ellsworth Huntington of America, accepting these figures, think that they are not surprising in places “where practically everyone knows about and practises birth-control as he sees fit.”

The next paper after Dr. Edin’s, in 1931, was read by Professor Eugen Fischer of Germany, who gave the average number of children as “professors of universities, 2.8; of high schools, 2.4; of peasants, 6.5.” He concludes that this is “*ein furchtbaren Zustand*,” “*ein Volk dessen Fortpflanzung man als die eines sterbenden Volkes bezeichnen muss.*” What is one to make of such conflicting evidence?

I believe the Swedish figures are correct, and that the explanation given is at least partly true. Both Sweden and the German cities had low birth-rates.

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It looks as if the peril of the dysgenic birth-rate may not be permanent. Are there any signs of a rising birth-rate in our upper and middle classes? I have no evidence, except that judging from a limited observation I think that girls in my own walk of life marry earlier, that they are very indifferent to prudential considerations, and that nearly all of them hope to have families.

Organised propaganda in favour of a higher birth-rate has been carried on energetically in Germany, Italy, and Japan. There has been no disguise about the motives. The notorious von Bernhardi wrote in 1911, in his *Germany and the Next War*:<sup>1</sup>

“Strong, healthy and flourishing nations increase in numbers. From a given moment they require a continual expansion of their frontiers; they require new territory for the accommodation of their surplus population. Since almost every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must as a rule be obtained at the cost of its possessors, that is to say by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity.”

In another book he says:

“We must endeavour to acquire new territories throughout the world by all means in our power, because we must preserve to Germany the millions of Germans who will be born in the future.”

The date of these utterances must be noted. This shameless doctrine was promulgated long before Hitler.

<sup>1</sup> Lt.-Gen. F. von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*, Edward Arnold and Co.

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Can legislation have much effect on the birth-rate? The Roman Lex Papia Poppaea, brought in by two childless magistrates, was admittedly a complete failure. The *ius trium liberorum* was sometimes granted by favour. In the last century, as I have said, the Speenhamland system and the employment of young children in factories certainly stimulated the birth-rate in an unwholesome way, though the great increase was due to the fall in the death-rate. The vehement propaganda in Germany after 1932 had the effect of raising the birth-rate from 14.7 to 19 or 20. But this was a small result, when we remember that at the end of the last century the rate in Germany was 35. In Russia bonuses are offered for large families, and the rate is very high; but it always has been high. In the opinion of some judges, "such quack medicaments as bounties for babies are purely mischievous, encouraging the improvident couple to spawn incompetents on the world *ad libitum* and to be rewarded for the crime."<sup>1</sup> But the device will probably be less successful than its advocates hope, now that overworked women have a say in the matter.

The waste of human lives in an overpopulated country is terrible. It is said that in China half the infants born die before they reach one year of age. "Life tables give India an infant death-rate of 290 per thousand for males and 285 for females between 1901 and 1910."<sup>2</sup> We may hope to see a less wasteful

<sup>1</sup> East, *Mankind at the Crossroads*, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 245.

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and less painful method of relieving the pressure.

The concept of an optimum population is obviously of the greatest importance. Unfortunately, there has been much confusion on the subject. The economic optimum is not necessarily the social optimum; still less does it necessarily correspond with the ideal of the humanist and moralist. Some statisticians wish to erect a fence round their own preserve. The "standard of living" is used by them in a quantitative sense only. Professor Fairchild says:

"It appears that the content of the phrase should be restricted to material, tangible goods that are susceptible of observation and measurement, ignoring all those spiritual and intellectual enjoyments which, however important, have no material basis and therefore are not susceptible of exact treatment."

Others have said that "by the optimum density of population is meant that density which yields the highest individual or average standard of life." Sir Charles Close uses the word much more correctly when he says that the optimum density is that which secures "the maximum moral, mental and physical fitness of the race." To assume that the highest average of measurable commodities is the optimum is to beg the whole question.

An attractive but not very useful phrase is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. If this means that other things being equal it is better that there should be 3,000 million people in the world than only 2,000 million, we may ask "Why?" Mere

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bigness has no intrinsic value. If it means that as many people as possible should be satisfied with themselves and with their circumstances, the test, though not valueless, is far from infallible. The happiest man in the world may conceivably be a lunatic who imagines that he is the Emperor of China. Among sane persons, it has been said that a happy man has always a good reason to give: the fact that he is so. But there is a deeper wisdom in St. Paul's words, "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," and in the German proverb that "without sorrows no man is ennobled." If instead of "happiness" we substitute the word "welfare"—what the Greeks called *eudaimonia*—the question remains unanswered in what a man's welfare consists. It does not consist, our Lord said, in the multitude of the things that he possesses.

Again, we must not take as our standard the happiness only of those who are now alive. Burke in a famous passage already quoted said that human society consists of the living, the dead, and those yet to be born. Louis XV is said to have exclaimed, "After me the deluge." The Greeks knew of a similar saying: "When I am dead let earth be mixed with fire." The vulgarian says: "Posterity has done nothing for me; why should I do anything for posterity?" We must not talk like this. We have no right to squander our irreplaceable mineral wealth. We have no right to turn fertile land into a desert by greedy cropping. We have no right to deface the

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beauty of our earth by unsightly buildings. We owe almost everything to our predecessors; that debt must be paid to those who come after us.

The optimum population may be affected by our use of money. A rich nation may waste its surplus income on commercialised sport, betting and gambling, alcohol, tobacco, millinery and cosmetics. Such a nation might be benefited by being obliged to lead a simpler life. This change is likely to befall us in England very soon. But an increase in numbers would do us no good; it would only cause widespread unemployment. To say, as some students of the subject have done, that unemployment has nothing to do with overpopulation, is nonsense.

The Greeks had a proverb that the four best things for a mortal man are health, good looks, money honestly come by, and to be young with one's friends. Physical fitness is admitted to be desirable by all eugenists. Many of our townsfolk are of very poor physique; the countrymen are on the whole better. Urbanisation has been a very doubtful benefit, and if, as I expect, there will be a shrinkage in our town population owing to the loss of foreign trade, the England of the twenty-first century may be healthier and handsomer than our contemporaries. But there are more valuable things even than bodily health, and an optimum population must enjoy enough leisure to cultivate the things of the mind. The strain of intra-group competition must not be too severe.

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The mention of health leads naturally to what are called negative eugenics, the prevention of the perpetuation of undesirable variations. Deleterious variations are far more common in nature than beneficial ones. Natural selection weeds them out; now that humanitarianism protects them, some form of rational selection is surely necessary. Health certificates before marriage are required in several countries, mainly in order to secure that neither party is suffering from the worst of contagious diseases. Two States of North America add tuberculosis as a bar to marriage; Hawaii and the American Canal Zone add leprosy. Insanity and epilepsy are a bar in many parts of the United States; Mexico and Sweden forbid idiots and imbeciles to marry.

There are of course many other diseases and defects which may make a man or woman an undesirable parent. But the operation of these laws is so uncertain that even if statistically the chances of a healthy family are rather unfavourable, it would generally be considered cruel to forbid marriage in such cases. Without legislation, "madness in the family" prevents many marriages, and the sisters of a haemophiliac usually remain unmarried, that disease being transmitted through apparently healthy females. A diffusion of the ascertained laws of heredity may in this country be more acceptable than legislation.

Since it is impossible to segregate degenerates, and

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since the prohibition of marriage might lead to an increase in illegitimate births, attempts have been made to allow marriage, with the normal marital relations, while preventing the birth of children. The subject of sterilisation, a minor operation which has this effect, is distasteful to me and probably to many of my readers. I will therefore content myself with giving the facts about the prevalence of the practice. In Germany the sterilisation law was passed in 1934, and between that date and the beginning of the war 475,000 "mental and physical defectives" are said to have been operated on.<sup>1</sup> There are strong grounds for suspicion that this monstrous campaign of mutilation was ordered on racial rather than on medical grounds. In America 17,958 males and 24,683 females, the large majority by request of the patients, have been so treated. Among other countries which have passed similar laws are British Columbia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Japan, Norway, and Sweden.

In one way or another, population must be regulated, if wars of aggression are to be stopped. As I have said, it is quite intolerable that a nation which is increasing beyond the numbers which it is able to support should think itself morally justified in dispossessing its neighbours and seizing their territory. It is not as if there were still almost empty lands inhabited only by wandering savages. The few underpeopled regions are all far away from

<sup>1</sup> *Burch*, pp. 92-104.

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Europe and are filling up rapidly by natural increase and immigration. Some of them, like the uplands where the tributaries of the Amazon rise, are still very inaccessible. It is also abundantly clear that the nations which, unless excluded by force, would be the most successful colonists, are those with a low standard of living and a high standard of work. We have had our day as a colonising Power, and must adapt ourselves to conditions unlike those of the last century. We should be safer, and probably happier, if we could feed our own population. The recent unexpected rise in our birth-rate, which I find difficult to account for, will probably be only temporary, for the régime of mass bribery and reckless expenditure under which we are now living cannot last long. Our standard of living cannot permanently be higher than that of the countries whose products we wish to exchange for our own. We are inferior to the French in the art of living and to the Germans in industry and organisation. We may learn something from both of them, but there are hard times in store for us, and unless we can accept the standard of values which is plainly given us in the New Testament, there must be grave social troubles. Mammon has no more prizes to offer; one temptation at any rate has been removed. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." We are not an avaricious people. The typical Englishman is not the banker or the factory hand, but the yeoman who likes living in the country and working

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in the open air. He also loves freedom, and will I hope not consent to be driven much further along the road to serfdom. But I do not think that these improvements are attainable with a population of fifty millions on an area of 120,000 square miles, and I therefore advocate a reduction in numbers.







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